UNITY OF RELIGIONS

Swami Sivananda

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BY SRI SWAMI SIVANANDA

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

Age after age, men-of-God have come to re-awaken the spirit of real religion in man. Their awakening call has been worded in the language of the times, comprehensible by the common man of the age. The prophets returned to their "Source"; but their message endured. It came to be interpreted and "compared" with that of the other prophets. Differences were emphasised and exaggerated. Thus came conflicts!

The Prophet of the New Age, Sri Swami Siva nanda, is the Prophet of Religious Unity-Unity of Mankind in all sectors, as the fundamental tenet of true religion. He is therefore the fulfilment of the prophets of the past.

In this volume are brought together some of his essays and poems on this vital problem. In the first chapter are given a few universal prayers. In the second are given his essays on the universality of religion. In the third are given some of his poems on the subject: these poems act as "Sutras" condensing great ideas within a few words. In the fourth chapter is given an anthology of similar thoughts from the major religions of the world.

The publishers hope that this publication would further Sri Swamiji's yeoman services to the cause of unification of the hearts of people belonging to all the religions of the world.

Publishers.

INTRODUCTION

THE VEDAS ON UNITY

Composed in the early dawn of civilization, the following verses are an illustrious example of a profound conviction in the unity of existence which occupied the minds of the sages of yore. The first five verses are from the earliest piece of Sanskrit literature, composed no one knows when, but certainly several thousands of years before us.

These early ideas about the unity of existence, beautifully portray the spirit of oneness, toleration and amity, which is a deeply embedded characteristic of Hinduism.

FROM THE "RIG VEDA"

1. Let us all, in unison like true friends, invoke upon God, best known in His revealed Law (of Nature) for our protection and help in all our endeavours for the attainment of things difficult to achieve and in all our battles of life. (1, 30, 7)
2. O Adorable Almighty! In the whole universe Thou dost the work of harmonizing and uniting, and most fully reveal Thyself in the world. We, therefore, beseech Thee to bestow upon us, in every way, all the means that will enable us to live in peace and harmony. (X, 191, 1)
3. Let all your activities be so directed as to lead you to one common goal; let there be conference held among you in a common tongue. Let all your minds be of one accord to acquire knowledge of the various lores. Do thou as the enlightened did in all ages, perform your tasks in life in co-operation and har mony with your mind in full agreement for the acquisition of knowledge and worship of God, the real object of your devotion. (2)
4. Let the object of your counsels be acceptable to all, and the place of your assembly common, your minds in accord, and your hearts united together. (3)
5. Let your object in life be one and the same, your hearts equal, and your minds in full agreement, so that an excellent, common status of life may be achieved for all. (4)

FROM THE "ATHARVA VEDA"

1. I ordain for you, concord of heart, unanimity of mind, and freedom from hatred in dealings with each other. Love one another in all ways. (III, 30, I)
2. Neither a brother should hate his brother, nor the sister be unkind to her sister. You ought to speak with one another most gently, being of one mind, and keeping the same ideal before you. (3)
3. I ordain in your home the Vedic principles from which the enlightened never err, nor do they bear hatred towards one another, so that they may serve as the right guiding knowledge for all men. (4)
4. Worship the adorable God, all of you together (attaching yourselves to Him) just as the spokes of the wheel are attached to the nave from all around. (6)

5. I enjoin on all of you to be mutually helping one another, to be united in your mind, and to have one goal in life. You should, like the wise of all ages, ever cherish liberation of your souls, and to this end may peace of mind increase among you, evening and morning. (7)

6. Let your bodies and minds work together in harmony for the achievement of the common ideal (general welfare). It is for this that God, the Protector of the universe, has brought you together in life. (VI. 34, 1)

SAB NAM HARI TERE HI

Narayana Narayana Allah Allah

Sab Nam Hari Tere Hi, Sab Ka Vidhata.

Koyi Math Ho, Koyi Path Ho, Tere Dwara Hi Jata

Koyi Doonde Kahin Doonde, Tuj Hi Ko Hai Pata.

Mandir Ho, Masjid Ho, Girja Ya Gurudwara

Har Chowkhat Haridwara. (Narayana)

Jis Math Ka Gandhi Ne Upadesh Kiya Hai

Us math ne Bandhutvaska Sandesh Diya Hai

Hindu Ho, Muslim Ho, Sikh Ho, Ya Isayi

Sab Manav Sab Bhai..... (Narayana)

Narayana Narayana Allah Allah

All Indeed, only Thy Name, Thou, the sustainer of all,

Whatever Religion, whatever Creed, all go through Thee

Whomever wheresoever, Thou alone art seen.

Mandir or Mosque, Church or Gurudwara...

Thou, alone art glorified. (Narayana)

The Religion which has been taught by Gandhi

Gives the message of Universal Brotherhood

Hindu or Muslim, Sikh or Christian

All indeed human beings, all are brothers. (Narayana)

राम या रहीम

मेरे लिए है एक सा राम या रहीम

मेरे लिये है एक सा कृष्ण या करीम

मेरे लिये है एक सा गौड या अल्ल।

मेरे लिये है एक सा आहुरमज्द जेहोवा ।प।

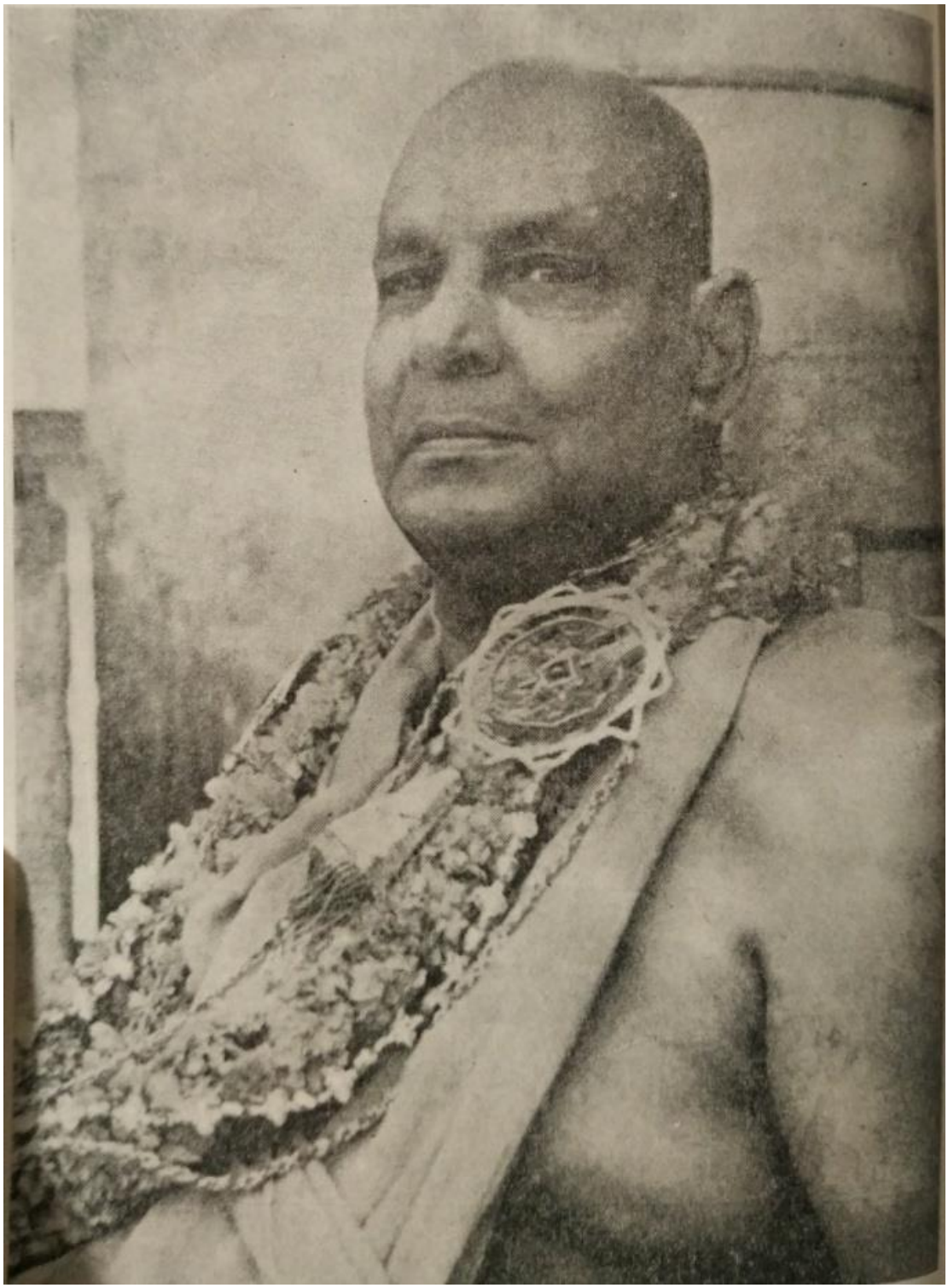
मेरे लिये है एक सा क्राइस्ट या कृष्ण

मेरे लिए है एक सा सत्र सन्त पैगम्बर

मेरे लिए है एक सा सब गुरु और फ्रायर । १।

कहत शिवानन्द सबको मैं एक रूप मानता

सब धर्मों में एक सत्य को मैं जानता । २।



CHAPTER ONE : PRAYERS

1. UNIVERSAL PRAYERS

I

O adorable Lord of Mercy and Love!

Salutations and prostrations unto Thee.

Thou art omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient.

Thou art Existence, Knowledge, Bliss Absolute.

Thou art the Indweller of all beings.

Grant us an understanding heart,

Equal vision, balanced mind,

Faith, devotion and wisdom.

Grant us inner spiritual strength

To resist temptations and to control the mind.

Free us from egoism, lust, greed and hatred.

Fill our heart with divine virtues.

Let us behold Thee in all these names and forms.

Let us serve Thee in all these names and forms.

Let us ever remember Thee,

Let us ever sing Thy glories,

Let Thy Name be ever on our lips,

Let us abide in Thee for ever and ever,

II

Thou art, O Lord, the Creator of this universe,

Thou art the Protector of this world. Thou art in the grass and in the rose. Thou art in the sun and in the stars. Salutations unto Thee, O Bestower of joy and bliss!

Sweet Lord! Let me be free from the clutches of birth and death. Let me be able to look upon all beings with equal vision. Let me be free from impurity and sin. Give me strength to control the mind. Give me strength to serve Thee and the humanity untiringly. Make me Thy fit instrument for Thy work. Make me pure and strong.

I bow to Thee, O indweller of all hearts. O Secret of secrets! Remove my weaknesses, defects and evil thoughts. Make me pure so that I may be able to receive Thy grace and blessings. O Lord! Thou art the

thread-soul that connects all beings. Thou pervadest all, permeatest and interpenetratest all that exists in this universe.

Thou art Light Divine. Thou art the dispeller of ignorance. Thou art the All-merciful Lord. Give me a life without disease. Let me remember Thee always. Let me develop all the sublime virtues.

Thou art self-luminous. Thou art my father, mother, brother, friend, relative and guide. Let me realize the Truth. Let me be free from greed, lust, egoism, jealousy and hatred. Prepare me as Thy sweet messenger on this earth so that I may radiate joy, peace and bliss to the whole world. Let me utilize my body, mind and senses in Thy service and in the service of Thy creatures. Breathe into me Thy breath of immortality. Let me recognise the Universal Brotherhood of Man. Let me love all as my own Self. Salutations unto Thee, O Lord of Compassion.

III

O adorable Lord of compassion, salutations unto Thee! Thou art infinite beauty, joy, bliss and peace! Thou art perfect, independent and ever free! Give me the spirit of sacrifice, strength and indomitable will to serve the humanity! Vouchsafe to me Thy grace and mercy!

O Almighty! Thou art my Redeemer and Saviour ! Free me from the bondage of this body and the round of birth and death. Make me drink the nectar of Immortal ty!

O Supreme Being, fill my heart with unflinching devotion unto thee. Let the flame of devotion to Thee grow brighter and brighter everyday!

O Infinity, O Eternity, O Immortality free me from all sorrows, dependence, delusion, weaknesses and defects! Grant me equal vision, balanced mind, divine virtues such as, courage, tolerance, forbearance, humility, mercy, purity and cosmic love!

O Omnipotent Lord! Strengthen my resolve to stick to the spiritual path and do my daily spiritual routine vigorously and regularly. Forgive my sins.

Free me from the obstacles in the spiritual path and all temptations. Give me inner strength to resist temptations!

O Indwelling Presence! Thou art my sole prop support, refuge and solace! Thou art the life of my life! Thou art the soul of my soul. Thou art transcendental bliss, peace and joy. Thou art one homogeneous essence. Let me be established in nonviolence, truthfulness, devotion and purity. Teach me to be steadfast in my devotion unto thee. Give me light and wisdom.

O Supreme Love! Salutations unto Thee! Thou art the Indweller of my heart. Give me the inner third eye of intuition or wisdom. May Self-realisation be my inexhaustible spiritual wealth, dispassion my crown, virtuous deeds my asset in the divine bank and renunciation the jewel of my heart! Crores of prostrations unto Thee. O Lord! I am Thine! Save me, protect me, guide me and enlighten me. Make me pure, perfect and free! Through Thy grace may all attain health, long life, peace, prosperity and Self-realisation.

2. UNIVERSAL ANTHEM

Thars: Sunaja

Glory to Thee, O Fair Mother Earth, common parent of all.
The common sacred place of birth of all humanity.
All are thy children, white, brown or black, yellow, short or tall.
Biess one and all to know and feel this true unity.
The continents are thy cradles and every race a child.
Clothed with the blue sky and the ocean calm and mild.
Thy winds, water and soil are the same everywhere,
Nourishing every being, common for all to share.
Though conduct, action and behaviour appear as diverse,
One alone is the Power that works in the universe.
Though words and languages differ in Peking or in Rome,
One alone is the Primal Sound, the Root Vibration OM.
Though upon the external surface, man as many appears,
In the Self he is one, thus declare sages and seers.
All that is God alone, there is no diversity,
The only Truth of this life is the essential unity.
In unity we live and by dissension we fall.
The one Almighty God is the Father of all.
This gracious earth is the Mother of all.
Each human being is the Brother of all.
As one Sun illumines the entire earth outside,
The one Spirit Universal in man doth reside,
Brightening and lightening the chambers of his heart,
Inspiring and indwelling each religion, science and art.
God is One, the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss, the same For all mankind,
Truth Supreme, the One Reality, Spirit Transcendental,
A golden Cord Spiritual the whole world to bind,
In bonds of Love and Brotherhood and Unity Eternal.

3. UNIVERSAL KIRTAN

1. Bhajo Lord Jesus Bhajo Lord Mohammed

Bhajo Khuda Khuda Bhajo Allah Allah

2. Bhajo Lord Buddha

Bhajo Tathagata

Bhajo Arhat

Bhajo Bodhisattwa

3. Bhajo Lord Confucius

Bhajo Lord Shinto

Bhajo Lord Lao-Tsze

Bhajo Lord Mao-Tsze

4. Bhajo Lord Rama

Bhajo Lord Krishna

Bhajo Lord Mahavir

Bhajo Tirthankaras

Bhajo Ahura Mazda

5. Bhajo Lord Zoroaster Bhajo Mansoor

Bhajo Shams Tabriez

6. Bhajo Wahi Guru

Bhajo Nanak Dev

Bhajo Guru Arjun

Bhajo Guru Govinda

7. Bhajo Saint Joseph Bhajo Saint Mathew

Bhajo Saint Patrick

Bhajo Saint Francis

8. Bhajo Vyasa Maharshi Bhajo Sankaracharya

Bhajo Vidyaranya

Bhajo Ramanujacharya

9. Bhajo Madhwacharya

Bhajo Vallabhacharya

Bhajo Nimbarkacharya

Bhajo Kabir Das

CHAPTER TWO

BASES OF UNITY

4. UNITY OF RELIGIONS

Religion is faith for knowing and worshipping God. It is not a matter of discussion on a club-table. It is the perfection and realisation of the true Self. It is the fulfilment of the deepest craving in man. Therefore hold religion as the goal of life. Live every moment of your life for its realisation. Life without religion is real death.

The essence of all religion is the same. Only nonessentials differ. Real religion is above mind and senses. Real religion is above ceremonials and rituals. Real religion begins when one has gone beyond the petty customs, manners and conventions. Real education is eternal life, in the immortal soul or Brahman. Philosophy is the rational aspect of religion, and religion is the practical aspect of philosophy.

Bhakti is the basis of all religious life. Bhakti destroys Vasanas and egoism. Bhakti elevates the mind to magnanimous heights. Bhakti is the masterkey to open the chambers of wisdom. Bhakti culminates in Jnana. Bhakti begins with two and ends in one. Those who fight on the point as to which is superior-Bhakti or Jnana-are groping in darkness, They have not understood the real Tattwa. ParaBhakti and Jnana are one.

A clear understanding of man's relation to God is a matter of momentous importance to students of philosophy, and all aspirants, philosophers, prophets, saints, sages, thinkers, Acharyas and all great religious leaders of the world have tried to explain the relation of man to God and Universe. Various schools of philosophy and different kinds of religious beliefs have come into existence on account of various explanations given by different philosophers.

The three schools of metaphysical thoughts are (1) Dualism (Dwaita), (2) Qualified Monism (Vishishtadwaita), and (3) Monism (Adwaita). They are all stages on the way to ultimate truth and Para Brahman. They are rungs on the ladder of Yoga. They are not at all contradictory. On the contrary they are complimentary to one another. These stages are harmoniously arranged in a graded series of spiritual experiences. Dualism, Qualified Monism, Pure Monism all culminate eventually in the Adwaita Vedantic Realisation of the Absolute or the transcendental Trigunatita Ananta Brahman.

Nothing has been of so much controversy and heated discussion as the question "Whether the world is real or unreal, whether the world exists or not?" If it exists, what is the nature of its existence? If it does not exist 'why' and 'how' do we perceive it? These are problems which have been exercising the human minds from time immemorial both in the East and the West. Sri Sankara says, "The world is an illusion". Sri Ramanuja says, "The world is real. It is the body of Narayana". Sri Gaudapada says, "There is no world in the three periods of time. It is all Brahman. Brahman alone exists".

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All these philosophers are correct from their own stand-point. There are various types of minds and different lessons are needed to suit different types of minds. An aspirant with a well-developed, subtle, sharp and one-pointed mind can grasp the highest teaching of Sri Gaudapada. Sri Ramanuja's teaching is

suitable for an average type of aspirant who cannot grasp the theory of illusion or the theory of nonevolution all at once. You will have to say to a neophyte that the world is real. He will be able to comprehend the theory of illusion after studying some books on Vedanta and after practising meditation for some time in seclusion.

The essentials or fundamentals of all religions are the same. Non-essentials only differ. The noble eightfold path corresponds to the sermon on the Mount, of Jesus or the practice of Yama Niyama or Sadachara or right conduct by Hindus or RajaYogins. Every religion shows the correct path to God-realisation.

The cardinal tenets of all religions are the same. All religions take the aspirant to the same goal. The roads or ways are different but the goal or destination is the same. The most important thing is, that one should practise what he says.

Quran or Zend-Avesta or Bible is as much a sacred book as the Bhagvad-Gita. All contain the essence of Divine Wisdom. Ahura Mazda, Ishwar, Allah, Jehovah are different names for one God.

Every religion emphatically declares, "One can attain eternal bliss, immortality, i.e. God-realisation. One should speak the truth, observe purity, or selfrestraint, love others and practise concentration and meditation". These are the fundamentals of all religions. This is more important. An intolerant man cannot attain God-realisation. As his intellect becomes callous on account of intolerance, he cannot grasp the Truth. All prophets are Messengers of God. They are great Yogins and realised souls who have had Divine intuitive perception of God. Their words are infallible and sacred. Had it not been for these prophets and their writings, there is no hope for Salvation and betterment for man. Each prophet helped mankind by dissemination of knowledge and founded the religion which was most suited to the people among whom they flourished. Glory to those prophets and their writings. May their blessings be upon you all!

Beloved friends! Behold the unity or oneness of all religions. He who knows the real Tattwa, who has grasped the essence of all religions will never enter into discussions or heated debates. May you all live happily with one heart !

May you all understand the essential unity of all religions! May the blessings of the founder of all religions be upon you all !

5. RELIGION AND MAN

The divine play of manifestation, through its scenes of appearing and disappearing in the variegated colours of life and death, drives home to mankind the lesson that this life is only an act in the stage of becoming where many parts are played and no part in itself is complete and enough to give the character of wholeness to the play. Every actor in the stage behaves in such a way that he does not portray himself as an unrelated independent personality but endeavours to be an integral part of the entire play.

This behaviour of the actor fitted to the wholeness of the play is his emotional affinity which unites all actors to the whole which is the ultimate purpose of religion. Religion shows him that he is a part of the whole, trying to abide by the law of the whole, and aiming at fulfilling the purpose of the whole; for the whole is truth, and the good of all is included in it, and no one can ever exist independently of the whole.

Man can never live without God, for God is the whole and man is its component. There is one God, the one Self of all beings; the one law, the inexorable law of cause and effect; there is one religion, the

indispensable religion of Self-realisation. Everyone is only one Self. As life has been made physically comfortable and comparatively effortless by modern inventions, the ease-loving man is prone to disregard the place of religion in his life and exalt the values of a materialistic civilization. But events have always disclosed the unreliability of the purely objective views and methods of physical science, since it is the experience of man that he is not really happier and the world is not in fact better even after his arduous attempts at extracting out of the external nature its latent resources in order to utilize the same for his own purposes. Where is satisfaction, where is happiness, and where is peace, then ?

Is anyone who has deeply and correctly thought over his conditions and the world's vicissitudes capable of asserting that the struggle for advancement through the physical methods has ended in the solace of man? The purely physical outlook is not compatible with the inner truth of the real man, for, religious discipline and not bodily pleasure is the rule to be followed in the course of right living. Let it not be thought that religion is dogmatic, other-worldly, pettradition of blind believers or irrational emotionalists. Religion is the most rational science of life itself, the science of man as he essentially is, not merely as he presumes himself to be. Religion is the way to the realization of the higher perfection. If perfection is a possibility, religion is the only means befitting the human ideal.

6. WHAT RELIGION MEANS TO HUMANITY

True religion is the religion that appeals to everyone, that should be practised by everyone, that is common to all, universal and that leads to the same goal every individual. A set of rituals or a bundle of dogmas cannot represent religion. What is most important is the practice of a religion that has high morality and ethical perfection as its basis, and seflessness and cosmic love as its manifestations. This religion does not wait for anyone's sanction. It does not need special text-books and special classes in which to study. Its abode is the heart. The field in which it manifests itself, is the world, which is also the school for the practice of this religion.

No sphere of human activity should be without the basis, support and inspiration of this fundamental religion. It is one's foremost duty to enshrine this religion of love and service in one's heart and practise this in one's daily life.

God is another name for perfection, freedom, independence and immortality. If one understands this, it will be seen that there could be no room for any dissension or discord. This conception will lead one to unity and harmony.

All religions have come from one source. There is no religion for God; but He has given us different paths to suit different types of people who are in different grades of intellectual, emotional and spiritual evolution. All religions point to the same objective; all religions place before us the same ideal; to control our mind, restrain our senses to find out the one common Consciousness that is hidden in all these names and forms.

If this ideal is practised, the heart of man will be purified and his prejudicial, selfish and egoistic attitude will be moulded in the light of his realization, The Sermon on the Mount, of Jesus Christ, the noble eightfold path of Gautam Buddha and the Yama-Niyama of Patanjali are basically the same in the spirit of their teachings; only the names are different. A rose is a rose; call it by any name you like.

The Upanishads proclaim the unity of existence. This one central theme runs through the utterances of all the seers of the Srutis. Truth is one, though sages have described it variously. That one reality pervades everything here, in essence. That alone exists, naught else. The material values of the world are illusory. It is only when the senses are withdrawn from the objects, when the mind is stilled and the intellect

transcended, then the inner eye of intuition is opened and man sees everything as God. To such an intuitive soul God alone exists, and nothing else; he proclaims with Yajna-valkya: “All this is dear to me, not because of their illusory appearances, but because in truth they are my own Atman, the Lord.”

Jesus, Buddha, Krishna, Mohammed, Zoroaster and Confucius, all of them have delivered the same message of love and unity, only in different words to suit their respective followers. Every sage’s message leads to the final goal which is God-realisation.

Even in the case of Hindu scriptures, we find several streams running parallel to each other: the stream of Knowledge (Jnana Yoga), the stream of Devotion (Bhakti-Yoga), the stream of Meditation (Raja Yoga), the stream of Selfless Action (KarmaYoga). The Upanishads contain the highest monistic wisdom; the Vedas prescribe various sacrificial rites; the Smritis extol righteousness; the Puranas generate in man love of God. Yet, all the paths, though seemingly different from each other, lead the aspirant to the same goal.

Those who try to bring about concord and harmony in various religions, are indeed blessed. Those who are intolerant, have not understood the real essence of their own religion. Truly, it is the misunderstanding of the true purport of the basic teachings of one’s religion, or complete heedlessness and disregard to their spirit, that has been the central cause of the suffering of mankind.

Of what use is the knowledge that the same Lord indwelleth all hearts, if one’s thoughts, words and deeds, do not tally and reflect this inner realization? Of what use is merely repeating that mankind belongs to the same parentage of God, if one refuses to do good to one’s neighbours, or at least treat them kindly ?

The central teaching of all religions is: “Be truthful; let your conduct be pure and righteous; love your neighbour as yourself; share what you have with others; never hurt others’ feelings; be kind to all; control your impulses and emotions; follow the path of courage and straightforwardness.” One should practise these. Only then can one be a true follower of one’s own religion.

It is the very antithesis of the spirit of true religion to look into the defects of other people’s religions with a vilifying attitude. Only then do quarrels arise. “My religion is superior; my religion dates back to fifth century B.C.” All these mean notions are the seeds of misunderstanding. All religions have come from God; every religion is good.

It is easy to speak of tolerance and the oneness of religion; but it is very difficult to develop a catholic vision and universal love. One has to remove, therefore, all the evil qualities that lurk in one’s mind: hatred, jealousy, prejudice, dislike and egotism. These are the barriers; only if one gets rid of these barriers, will one be able to develop cosmic Consciousness.

The negative traits in the human nature is difficult to eradicate; but ceaseless persevering efforts assure the victory. In the beginning the mind will revolt; the senses will revolt. One has to conquer the negative through continuous attempt at strengthening the positive.

If one wishes to get established in harmlessness, one must be patient, one must go on practising patience, without having to encourage wickedness or at the cost of disgracing one’s basic human dignity. Patience is a fundamental virtue; similarly, too, are selflessness, purity, truthfulness, catholicity, generosity and love. One must practise these with common sense, i.e., speak the truth without having to divulge other people’s secret; be generous without having to deprive one’s dependents of their basic needs, be selfless without having to demand the same amount of selflessness from others, and love others without having to make oneself cheap or contemptible.

Pure love breaks all bonds. It pulls down all barriers. It annihilates all limitations and differentiations. It flows perennially towards the entire creation, even as the sun shines equally upon all. This love is indeed God-the universal God. It is a potent remedy to destroy the disease, hatred. He who has pure love in his heart, wins the heart of all.

This pure love is an irresistible force. To him whose heart is filled with pure love, the voice of his conscience is the voice of God. He engages himself in alleviating the sufferings of others. He is an ideal of selfless service. The Lord's will flows through him. He is ever joyful and never afraid. He brings peace and harmony in the lives of all he comes across. The basis of lasting unity of all humanity is the religion of pure love. This is the religion of humanity. This is what religion means to humanity.

7. REAL RELIGION

Religion, in effect, begins with the opening of the eye of intuition. Intuition leads to God-realization. Religious discipline aims at the opening of the eye of intuition. Before this stage is reached there is confusion. The intellect sees many diverse religious paths. The heart is seduced by worldly motives, and religious differences arise. But really all religious quarrels are intellectual or emotional, resulting from clashes of worldly motives. If these motives are shunned, the religion of faith takes man safe to intuition along one of the paths built by saints and sages. The conditions of successful journey up to intuition on any path, whether it lies through Arabia of Mohammed or Jerusalem of Christ or the Gangetic Himalayan Rishikesh, are the same, i.e., Truth, Purity, Love, etc. They are like food and water for the traveller.

The only basis of true and lasting unity of all humanity is the religion of the heart. Religion of the heart is the religion of love. Men can be united only if they are free from jealousy, hatred and petty-mindedness. Heart must be purified first. Ethical culture is of paramount importance.

Self-realization eliminates fear altogether. Real religion is Self-realization. Real religion is the conquest of fear and death.

8. RELIGION IS ONE

Children of immortal Being!

Peace be unto all! Without peace there is no joy, and a joyless life is valueless existence, for, it is a struggle, a pain, a process of becoming, a 'not-itself', a self-discrepancy. The reign of peace, therefore, means the freedom of life, the liberation of mankind, the salvation of all beings. All strive for peace, all want unperturbable happiness. All crave for eternal life. If we think and breathe, it is for this purpose; if the wind blows and the water wriggles, it is towards this end. Nothing changes and nothing moves even a bit, if not to perfect itself, to become whole and self-sufficient, to break down the barriers that limit its scope and jurisdiction of existence. The process of this kind of orgy and movement in thought and act, man calls "Religion."

Religion is not a dogma or a comfortable fancy or a hobby of a certain group of people. Religion is the expression of the universal impulse which none can resist. Every person thinks differently, and yet, thinks towards the One Supreme Being. Differences are in the roads and the ladders, not in the city reached or the roof climbed over. The lower distinctions can be brought together and reconciled only in the light of the higher unity of the Truth. Man is a combination of the animal and the Divine-God and brute, crossed at a point. Every individual has both these characteristics in him. The brutal propensity hurls him down to difference, misery, battle, blood-shed and death and the Divine reality lifts him up to the rich and splendid

realm of glorified and purified plentitude of the immortal Essence. Religion is the answer to the call of this higher impetus from the One Real God who is seated in the heart of the universe as its very life itself.

Therefore, O ardent religionists | can you not account for religious wars, for poverty, for grief, for restlessness? The seed of the perpetration of evil is sown by the lack of the ability to apprehend the nature of wisdom, truth and justice. It is not the human aspiration but the subhuman propensity that ravages the very values of life through contempt for alien temperaments and hatred towards other in. Habitants of the earth. It is a great mistake that the boys and the girls of today are spending their career in "education for job, bread and comfort", neglecting the central realities of true civilization and culture. It is imperative that all schools and colleges should, if they intend to work for the happiness and freedom of mankind, include as the most important item in the curriculum, the art of perfect living, of the essential values of life-virtue, love, truth, purity, universality, wisdom and justice, which constitute the very heart of religion, religion which soars high up to the possibility of cosmic salvation. There is no life in the educative process if it is destitute of the religious consciousness, for religion is the very meaning of life's purpose, the one aim of the struggle for existence. If religion is rejected, there is nothing left in the mortal, except a heap of bones and a mass of flesh.

Why modern civilization has despised religion is, because it understands by religion an outburst of the irrational spirit. Far from it! Religion is the light that enlivens the most rational life, the manifestation of the eternal glow of intelligence that peeps through even the mightiest genius of the world. There can be no civilization without religion if it is destitute of spirituality. That religion which aims at nothing more than a happy utilitarianism, is not a solacing religion. Materialism is the crude product of a want of proper illumination and insight into the true essence and hence it is not worthy of consideration. An impure heart and conceited brain cannot understand religion. True religion begins where the intellect ends. Religion is neither emotion nor scholarship, but knowledge that is direct and immediate, a faith born not of practical necessity but of impersonal experience. The revelations of the Vedas and the Upanishads, the gospel of the Buddha, the teachings of Christ, all have sprung from an impersonal source, though this impersonality is made known to us only when it expresses itself through personalities. No intelligent man of the world can say that he has reached the zenith of intelligence; knowledge grows and widens when experience deepens itself. Many rank materialists have turned into great spiritual heroes, which shows that the shallow world cannot satisfy the deep spirit in man. This One Spirit is common to all and, therefore, religion must be One, not two or many. Though shirts and coats may be many, the person is the same who puts them on.

Therefore, fight not, argue not, be not intolerant, O happy sons of God! Blossom ye joyous flowers of the garden of the earth 1 There is no Asiatic or European or American, no Hindu, or Christian or Moslem, but there are sons of God, worshipping Him in the temple of the universe, there are seekers of Truth, who are studying in the school of the vast Nature, there are human beings who are marching towards the Divine Being, there is the finite stretching itself to the infinite. Therefore, peace is thy birthright, religion is the way, universal brotherhood is the ideal, spiritual perfection is the one goal of each and every inhabitant of this earth. Mere bread for the body is not enough; religion is the bread of the soul, with out which life is but death and civilization a mere mockery.

May you all realize the aim of true religion! May perfect peace reign over the whole world! May the Almightly Lord bless all.

9. RELIGION IS ONE-PRACTISED VARIOUSLY

God is one; diverse are His creations. Truth is one; various are its expressions. The colour of light is white, but it is composed of seven main colours. Religion is one, but many are its forms of practice.

In theory there can be only one religion, as there is only one God. There cannot however be a time when there will be only one religion in practice.

Religion is one in the sense that the quest for the Ultimate is common in all faiths. Modes of approach and secondary details are bound to vary but the final goal is the same in each case.

Religion is one in the sense that its emphasis on what is positive and its opposition to what is negative are unanimous, but the means for the abstention from or the transmutation of the negative are bound to be diverse.

Why?

Variety is the law of nature. No two individuals are cut in the same image. Temperamental moulds, emotional attributes and psychological make-ups differ from person to person. Therefore, it is rather difficult to find two persons having exactly the same conception of God.

In practice, thus, there will always be different religions, or rather conceptions or modes of religion, to suit different moulds of mind, racial characteristics, traditional back-grounds, historical influences and geographical conditions.

Evolution is the law of nature. In every individual there is always a persistent urge to progress towards the better and to get over imperfections and limitations. There is always an eternal quest for uninterrupted well-being, happiness and fulfiment and there is also the perpetual dread of pain and death. It is this urge for evolution and happiness, and the fear of pain and death that gave birth to religion in the early dawn of civilization.

There was also the factor of the unknown power, so evident in this phenomenal world and in every life, and yet so perpetually mysterious and elusive, that formed the pivot of all religious quest. The urge to know and to penetrate the realms of the unknown and beyond death was the second important factor in the history of religion.

Then, finally, there was the very essential and decisive influence that was attempted to be exerted by religion upon social life for mutual welfare, amicable relationship with one another, for peace, concord and harmony in society, and also for collective prosperity.

Thus in different regions and at different times, many forms of religion sprang up, their fundamental ideals being almost identical and yet their ritualistic practices widely divergent. This diversity in religious practices was mainly due to the cultural back-ground of the races and their historical traditions and customs and manners of life.

Today there are eleven surviving major religions, with multifarious subdivisions and affiliated beliefs. These subdivisions are the obvious corollary of the changes of time. No religion could afford to be static, as each had to be adapted to the shifting needs of the day. So the susbdivisions were unavoidable, and they will continue to be through ages to come. These subdivisions would have become separate religions by themselves, but for the inevitable, unifying force of traditional and cultural integrity that bound them to their mother religions, as well as due to the absence of sufficiently dynamic and great personalities attached to them.

Buddhism was rather a subdivision of Hinduism, but in the long run it found itself incapable of maintaining a separate, overwhelming existence in the native land of Hinduism, though today it is a dominant religion outside India, where the indigenous cultural back-grounds wer different.

Sikhism, too, was rather an offshoot of Hinduism, which was born of historical necessity at a time when the militant Islam came to India as an ideological spearhead of Moslem invasions. Till today, it continues to maintain a separate existence due to historical reasons. Hinduism lacks a militant drive at the face of militant opposition, and is overwhelmed by too many ritualistic intricacies and caste-distinctions, and so long as these factors remain, Sikhism will continue to exist in this country.

Now, why there are only eleven main religions? Why not many more? Indeed, there would have been many more of religions today, had the founders and the protagonists of the various philosophical schools and religious ideologies possessed the same amount of proselytizing drive and vigour like that of the founders and the vanguards of the major existing religions.

A Socratic religion would have been flourishing now, had his followers succeeded in converting an Emperor like Ashoka, or possessed the dynamic proselytizing impetus of the Apostles.

Buddhism became one of the dominant religions of the world mainly because it had the initial backing of Ashoka strengthened by the marvellous genius of his missionaries and the later itinerant monks who were able to convert many of the rulers of East Asia through the Buddha's gospel of peace and love.

Christianity, too, expanded itself mainly through the conversion of the aristocrats of Asia Minor during its early existence, and when the rulers of Europe were subsequently converted, it was but a foregone conclusion that the masses, too were bound to imitate their sovereigns' example who held the sway of life and death over their subjects in those days.

The success of the expansion of Islam was chiefly through the power of the sword. Indeed, many Moslem invaders found the reason for their adventures into foreign territories in their self-imposed righteousness of leading the holy war of Islam against the"non-believers."

Hinduism had altogether a different history. It had no single founder; rather it is not a single religion, but a combination of several religions, bound by an integral bond of unity. Many Rishis and seers have contributed to its growth. It never led any aggressive war for proselytizing other people to its creed. It has the finest and the loftiest philosophy that human mind could conceive of and yet is replete with most bafflingly rigid, sectarian and anachronistic practices that are rather a blot to its pristine purity. But it should not be overlooked that the latter are, to a great extent, a corollary of India's historical upheavals. It is these rigid formalities and compartmentalism that have made Hinduism withstand the frequent shocks of alien invasions. If they were not there, the people of India would have been en-block converted into Islam as in Persia, Egypt, Afghanistan, and other middle-eastern and south-east-Asian countries.

Every religion has the finest spiritual ideals and the noblest of moral principles for the evolution of many formalities and practices that are unquestionably anachronistic. Every religion has the loftiest principles of justice, and yet in the name of each and in many cases with the sanction of religious Scriptures, many things are perpetrated which are contrary to justice and also to the fundamental tenets professed by each.

Taken as a whole, in every group of Scriptures, belonging to different religions there are bound to be contradictions, in spite of the arduous effort for their reinterpretation and reconciliation by their votaries. What is more important to be taken into consideration is that no religion can afford to remain static, and no single individual has written all the Scriptures of a single religion. Opinions vary from person to

person, temperaments differ, and social conditions, mental outlook and evaluations change from time to time.

The correct course is to accept the best, and not to bother about the rest. What is found to be unsuitable is better to avoid and ignore rather than enter into polemics about their being right or wrong. What is suitable for one may not be suitable for another, and what is suitable today may become completely outmoded after a century. It is enough if one sincerely practises even a dozen of the cardinal precepts of one's religion.

The fundamentals never change and are universally applicable to all in various degrees.

Though one might be a follower of a particular religion, it is generally found, no intelligent person can entirely reconcile himself with everything that is said in his religion. Thus, every person, though owing allegiance to his hereditary religion, has his own conception about that religion, at least so far as he himself is concerned,

We find, therefore, though mankind owes its allegiance to no more than a dozen religions or so, every intelligent individual follows his own religion, or rather what he seems to understand about the religion to which he belongs.

Times have greatly changed since the last of the major religions (Sikhism: 15^{th} century A.C.) was founded. Indeed, it would be very difficult today to establish a new religion. No important religion has been founded during the last five hundred years. There have only been further interpretations of the existing mother religions and further explorations in the field of philosophy.

Secularism predominates the outlook of most of the advanced nations. No longer can one find the support of an emperor to convert large masses of his subjects. This is an age of political ideologies. The more immediate needs are economic and social. The problem of religion is apparently secondary in the lives of the people, rather religion hardly presents a problem.

People have become more individualistic in their outlook. Even thirty-five years of communist rule in the USSR has succeeded in converting only three per cent of its population to the creed of its government. It is most improbable that any future government or any of the existing ones would try to champion a new religion. Mass conversion to a new religion will be very remote for centuries to come. There can only be more of Shankaras, Ramanujas, Martin Luthers Kants and Hegels and so on, to effect modification of and to reinterpret the existing religions and also to found new schools of philosophical outlook. There will, of course, be more of subdivisions, but it is improbable that they will independently exist outside the ambit of the mother religions.

As already said, the increasingly individualistic tendency in the people and the progressive trend of the human thought would induce intelligent individuals to evolve their own conceptions of religion, each according to one's liking, though they would externally owe their nominal allegiance to their respective, hereditary religions.

The basic tenets of religion will ever remain the same. The quest for the perfection of the human personality and the urge to transcend all kinds of limitions, imperfections, shortcomings and weaknesses, the unceasing search for the Unknown, the perpetual struggle to know that which is infinite and absolute- all these will ever continue to be the common objective of religion, though the ways and means for the attainment of this one universal goal will be as numerous as the Population of the earth.

Religion, therefore, will continue to be one, though practised variously!

10. THE COMMON IDEAL OF ALL FAITHS

The ideal of every religion is to awaken men from deep slumber of ignorance of his real nature and to liberate him from the shackles of egoism selfishness and inordinate attachment.

The basic teaching of all faiths is 'Be good and do good.' This might otherwise be expressed in four words: serve, love, meditate, realise.

Everyone has a positive and a negative side of one's inner nature, which expressed itself in the individual's aptitudes and outward behaviour. The process of religion is to enable man to overcome his negative instincts with the help of the hidden, innate positive traits that are present in every human being.

The process of self-culture ensues a growing understanding that one is, in essence, what everything else is, and that every thing else is but a repetition, ad infinitum of what one is within oneself. From the origin of this consciousness of the unity of all creations springs forth a natural tendency to treat one's fellow beings amicably, with love and affection, tolerance and good will.

Annihilation of egoism and selfishness are not achieved by piously listening to their condemnation, or a half hearted wish to eradicate them, or by openly proclaiming that they are obstacles to individual spiritual progress and universal peace it demands a sincere, persistent effort to rise above the animal instincts in one's thoughts, aspirations and day-today actions.

No religious formalities, ceremonials and protestations can be of any use so long as one's heart is not transformed. No attempt at establishing a universal religion will be successful if it fails to emphasise the practice of the fundamentals of one's own religion. The basic tenets of all religions are concurrent; their ideal is the same. This basis itself can be called a universal religion.

Insist upon goodness; for this is a universal factor. Ethics is the basis of real religion. Without morality there is no religion. The code of morals may slightly vary from place to place, but fundamentally morality, too, is one and the same throughout the world.

Love is the fundamental basis of all morality. Love is therefore, the key to the realms of practical religion. Love is the one side of the coin, on the other side of which is peace. He who has cultivated unselfish love, enjoys peace and radiates peace. He who loves, knows God; for love is God and God is love.

Place the practical tenets of your own religion before the followers of the same religion, and devise ways and means of enabling them to express these tenets in their daily life. Present the fundamental, practical aspects of a religion-aspects that concern man himself and his own evolution, aspects that do not make him feel that his religion is superior to other religions. If you have to refer to other religions, refer to them in catholic terms, pointing out how they, too, contain in essence, the very truths that your own religion proclaims. This is the way to religious unity. This is the way to universal peace, This is the way to prosperity. Finally this is the way to God.

11. FUNDAMENTAL UNITY OF RELIGIONS

(Following is the text of Sri Swami Sivananda's speech broadcast by the Bombay Station of the All-India Radio on the Christmas Eve, 24th December 1950. The speech was recorded earlier).

Blessed Immortal Self,

Loving Pranams to you all who are divine sparks from that one common Supreme Effulgence, the Almighty God. You are all rays of That Same Infinite Light of lights that is the common source and goal of the entire creation. It is with great joy that I am here to speak to you upon a most vital subject, that is, the underlying oneness, the fundamental unity of all the so-called diverse religions.

I regard it as specially vital at this time because I have unshaken belief that a proper understanding of this essential unity is the most effective and powerful factor in overcoming all the superficial differences and conflicts that are filling the world today and making people restless and unhappy. To feel the underlying oneness that exists amongst all creatures of this universe you have only to know through a little reflection that the religions of this world are merely many means or methods for attaining single common goal. This goal is the attainment of divine consciousness. This goal is the realisation that you are neither this perishable body nor that changing and finite mind, but you are all pure ever-free Atman, Remember always "Ajo Nityah Saswatoyam Purano" Unborn Eternal Permanent is this Ancient one.

This is your real nature. You are not this little passing personality hooked on to a name and form. You are not Ramaswamy or Mukherji or Mehra or Garde or Apte. You have only fallen into this little delusion by an accident through some passing cloud of ignorance. Awaken and realise that you are Pure Atman. This is what every religion makes you do. All religions fundamentally have as their aim the attainment of this spiritual awareness, viz; that you are all an integral part and parcel of the One Consciousness that pervades everywhere. Let me remind you of the great, grand declaration "Ishavasyam Idam Sarvam" All this is pervaded by the Supreme. Also "Purusha Evadam Sarvam" All that exists is that One Self alone.

Why so many Religions ?

If this is the common goal of all, why then should there be so many religions? Yes. The goal is one. Yet the innumerable beings striving for its attainment are people of so many temperaments varying tastes, aptitudes and capacities that the wise ancients found it proper to formulate various paths and practices to beautifully suit every type of human tempera. Ment, taste and ability. Thus, to a man of proper understanding, these different paths are not so many confusing blots upon the scroll of human history but are standing testimony to the loving wisdom of our ancients. Prophets and saints appearing on earth at different periods of time found sections of mankind in varying conditions of life. Beholding this, these Great Ones evolved paths best suitable to the peculiar needs of the people and the times. Therefore, you find that superficially there appear differences and varieties in many of the external observances prescribed to followers of the several religions. But, nowhere did they differ in their goal which is always the transcending of all these limitations, defects, pains, sufferings and imperfections of this temporary, mundane life, and the attainment of the Supreme Experiences of Eternal Bliss, Immortal Life, Absolute Knowledge and the Infinite Unified Consciousness, that One alone exists. Everything is in That, and That is in Everything. Herein you understand that beautiful significance of the great declaration "Ekam Sat Viprah Bahudha Vadanti" The Truth, the Ultimate Fact, is one; sages call it variously.

The Common Basis

In addition to the Goal being one, you also know that even in the practice of religion the essentials are the same, for all mankind. Innumerable details of little non-essentials may seem to be different; but essentially all the religions try to teach man to acquire the Bliss of the Atman through purification of his lower nature and by gradually building up the superstructure of the highest divine life upon the firm basis or foundation of perfect morality. Purification, Sadachara or good conduct, Sat Vyavahar or pure and truthful dealings, good character, development of sublime virtues, ethical perfectionthese form the very heart and soul of one and all the religions of the world. All religions are eternally based upon the firm foundations of good life, on the divine life. Truth, purity and universal love go to make up this

foundation. The fundamentals are the most important part of any religion. In every religion the common fundamentals teach man to be good, to do good, to be kind, to be compassionate towards all creatures, to see no difference from man to man, to unify all in one loving spiritual embrace; they teach man to see God in every face, to always engage oneself in spontaneous, loving, selfless service unto all creatures; to regard this service as worship of the Lord who is seated in all beings as the Indweller and Inner Controller. They teach man not to be deluded by the lure and glitter of the perishable objects of this world, not to be deceived by the senses, not to forget the real goal of life, attainment of God-vision. Also they teach men how to develop faith, how to be humble, how to control the senses how to overcome impure passions, anger and greed and how to lead a divine life of andere sublime aspirations, spotting morality, and lofty selfless service, ready and loving self-sacrifice. To live such a divine life forms the soul and substratum of every religion. These constitute the very core and essence of the teachings and preachings of the prophets and saints of the past. The life, personality and action of all the Seers of Bharata-varsha, and the Great Ones like Mohammed, Jesus Christ, Buddha, Zoroaster, the Tirthankara and saints like Chatitanya, Kabir, Ramananda, Sri Ramakrishna all exemplified this same grand ideal. This purification and transformation of human nature and the leading of a divine life forming as it does, the common basis of the world's religions, signifies the sweet unseen bond linking all humanity just as a beautiful golden thread holds together in oneness a necklace of veriegated gems. This beautiful necklace of lovingly linked religions forms the fittest garland to adorn the Cosmic Being, the Supreme Deity, at the common shrine of mankind. If the beads begin to feel that they are separate, the golden thread sweetly reminds them, "Beloved Ones! You are all one. To forget this beautiful concord and to fight at times and fill the air with discord is as foolish as for the children of one family and one house wearing dresses of different colours to feel that they are opposed to one another and to forget their common parentage".

Realise the Oneness

Imagine a pure white canvas on which is drawn a beautiful evening scenery of a group of pilgrims sitting round a blazing fire by the side of a forest stream. How absurd would you think if the water in the picture felt hostile to the fire drawn thereon. For you know that these two factors are a mere creation just a trick of a little paint and oil. Beneath it you find the one common canvas, pure permanent and solid, under the passing play of colours. Beloved Immortal Self! Rays of the same Divine Light! Dwell for ever in the loving awareness of this sweet and glorious unity that throbs in the spiritual heart of the entire mankind. I pray to you, commit not the grave blunder of forgetting this central fact and losing yourself in external rituals, little customs and conventions that seem to differ. For, if you do, you will be grasping the shadow and losing the substance. You will be helping invaluably in the noble cause of human solidarity if you will pledge yourself to feel this oneness, assert and manifest this oneness, and propagate and spread this message of unity everywhere.

The religious instinct or the religious feeling is the strongest and the deepest of all feelings in man. All other feelings are acquired by the individuals later on as he grows up into an adult in life, whereas, the religious instinct is deeply ingrained in the individual even from his very birth. Psychology will tell you that even parentally through heredity these deep-seated instincts of the parent's religious faiths and beliefs sink into the consciousness of infant individual. Therefore, you can imagine how very vital, how very strong this religious feeling is in man. To vitiate this sense with the misguided

And false separatist tendency has been the great blunder of unthinking and hasty people. To trans. Form this religious consciousness by the touchstone of love and of oneness will create amidst us such a great positive constructive power of sweet unity and harmony that it will immediately set to work in dissolving all differences, resolving all conflicts, ending all strifes and misunderstandings and giving to mankind in a large measure the sweetness of peace, concord, loving co-operation, harmony and prosperity for which

you are all eagerly thirsting and panting, The task of building up a harmonious future of peace and goodwill upon earth can only be done by such concerted co-operative endeavour brought about by such a world-religious unity.

Unity is Divinity

May you, all therefore, ever hold to and act in the light of the knowledge that all religions are one. All essentials are the same. Fundamentally there is absolute unity amongst all faiths and beliefs, for they teach man the life of goodness, of tolerance, of forgiveness, of harmlessness, of mercy, of charitability, and divine aspiration. Study with faith the great scriptures like the Bible, the Koran, the Zend-Avestha, the Gita, the Bhagavata, the Upanishads. Ever remember the one Supreme Being, the Common Parent of all. Constantly chant His Sacred Name and praise His Divine Glory. Strive always to annihilate pride and egoism, to develop sweetness, humility, a spirit of service. Be generous.

Be compassionate. Remove all selfishness and greed from the heart. Lead a life of self-restraint, service, devotion, spirituality and meditation. Strive to attain Self-realization. Attain Peace and Bliss. Radiate peace and bliss. And, help to establish peace, bliss and unity upon earth.

If this is done, I assure, no external factor of separation or difference will have any power to shake this unity or disturb this peace. Unity is divinity. Overcome, conquer and absorb through love all superficial discord and divergences.

May the Lord bless us with spiritual vision of love by which we shall perceive behind the little veil of name and form and behold everywhere the One God who alone pervades everywhere, who is immanent in all and works through all. May you realise 'Eko Devah Sarva Bhuteshu Gudha Sakshi Cheta Kevalo Nirgunascha'. The One Supreme Being is hidden in all creatures. He is the Eternal Inner Witness Animator, the ever pure non-dual One.

OM SHANTI OM SHANTI OM SHANTI

(By Courtesy of the All-India Radio Bombay)

12. FUNDAMENTALS OF RELIGION

Religion, God, Dharma, Karma and the Universe are eternal and beginningless. They are inseparable. Religion shows the way to salvation or the final beatitude, or freedom from birth and death.

Religion contains philosophy, mythology, ethics and rites. It prescribes various kinds of Sadhana or religious practices to suit various types of Sadhakas.

Real religion is one. It is the religion of heart. It is the religion of love. It is the religion of Vedas. It is Vedanta. It is the religion of silence, It is Life Everlasting in the Imperishable Absolute or the Eternal. Real religion is transcendental. It is above the senses, the mind and the intellect. It is Turiya or sleepless sleep, where there is neither sound nor colour, neither day nor night, neither light nor darkness, neither pleasure nor pain, neither virtue nor vice.

The ultimate source of religion is God. God] is the primary source of all knowledge. By a comparative study of the principal religions of the world, you will understand that the newer religions can be traced to older ones, the older ones to still older and so on, till you reach the most ancient and primitive religion of humanity.

There has never been any real invention in the realm of religion. The fundamental principles which constitute its essence are as the human race old as or this world. They were revealed by God to the Rishis or Seers in the beginning of Creation or Kalpa. They are found in the Vedas, which are admitted as the oldest religious books or scriptures in the library of mankind.

Scientists may have wonderful new discoveries or inventions in the realm of matter but there will never come a time when you will be able to know any 'new' truth about God. You may have a better understanding, a more thorough realization of the nature of God, but you will never be able to discover a new attribute of God or Brahman, because the knowledge of God has not been originated by the human mind.

So is the case also with all religious knowledge. There never has been, there never shall be, any real invention or discovery in the sphere of religion. There never was a religious founder, who had invented a new religion, or revealed a new truth. These founders are all transmitters only, but not original makers. There has been no entirely new religion, since the beginning of the world. Religion is ultimately of divine origin.

The Vedas are the ultimate source of all religions. They are the fountain-head from which the stream of religious knowledge has flowed through the channels of Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity and Mohammedanism. The common truths and principles of all religions are ultimately derived from the Vedas only. All religions in essence can be traced ultimately to the Vedas.

At the present moment all religions contain a mixture of truth, which is divine, and error which is human. The fundamentals or essentials of all religions are the same. There is difference only in the nonessentials. The apparent differences in religions are due to misconceptions or misconstruction of the long-forgotten truth of the Vedas on which they are ultimately founded. All systems of religion are equally divine and true. The conflicting points are all due to misconception of the truths on account of prejudice, bigotry, lack of purity of heart and subtlety and purity of intellect and perverted condition of the intellect of the people, according to the grades of their evolution.

The great majority of religions had their origin in prehistoric times. Hence there are no genuine documents or trustworthy traditions concerning them.

Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity and Mohammedanism are the six great religions of the world. There is no founder for Hinduism. All the other religions have their founders. They are named after the name of the founders. Jainism is only another form of Buddhism. Sikhism is based chiefly on Hinduism and partly on Islam. Brahmoism is born of Hinduism and Christianity; and so also with other minor rcligions.

Whenever any important truth of religion was suppressed by the arrogance and selfishness of the priestly class or forgotten through the ignorance of the people, there appeared a great saint or prophet or religious teacher. He emphasized that truth removed the dross which had concealed or obscured it and made it shine in its original brilliance, purity, splendour and glory.

In this way every new religion was only an endeavour to reform the older religion as it then existed and a protest against its abuses.

When in olden times people forgot all about the Vedic monotheism, there arose Zoroaster. He preached the worship of one God, Ahuramazda and condemed the worship of Devas.

When the religion of the Vedas degenerated into a blind observance of rites and sacrifice of animals, when the Sudras were treated with contempt by the ■Brahmins, there appeared the compassionate Buddha who stopped killing of animals and raised the status of Sudras.

When the priests of Judaism became arrogant, there arose Jesus to purify Judaism. When Christia■nity had also degenerated into idolatry and superstition, there appeared Mohammed to preach his monotheism.

When Hinduism degenerated on account of creeping in of superstitious belief and false worship, various reformers appeared to purge Hinduism of superstitions and wrong beliefs and observances,

Sri Sankara appeared to remove wrong beliefs and abuses in Buddhism and Jainism and established Kevala Adwaita or absolute monism. Sri Ramanuja appeared to teach Bhakti and make people practise devotion and realize God while remaining in the world.

If people become cruel, a teacher like Buddha appears to preach Ahimsa or non-injury. If they become timid, another teacher like Guru Govind Singh comes to infuse courage in them. If they become inclined towards rigorous Tapas, a teacher like Ramanuja comes and preaches: "Realize while enjoying in the world".

Thus all great religious teachers were original reformers. They tried to improve the existing religions and do good in their own way to suit the time and condition of the society in which they were born.

Mohammedanism is based chiefly on Judaism and partly on Zoroastrianism. Judaism is based on Zoroastrianism.

Mohammed borrowed from the Jews the doctrine regarding angels. The jews learned the names and offices of the angels from the Persians.

The Mohammedans believe in the immortality of the Soul and that there will be a day of resurrection when the dead will rise to receive the rewards and punishments of their actions in life in accordance with their merits and demerits. This doctrine has been taken from Judaism. The belief in the day of judgment has been taken from Judaism. Jews borrowed this idea from the Zoroastrians.

Mohammed speaks of Al-Sirat, the bridge of hell. The Jews also speak of the bridge of hell. The Jews and the Mohammedans have taken this idea from the Zoroastrians who teach that all men will have to pass over a bridge called Pul Chinavad on the last day.

After passing Al-Sirat, the faithful will reach Paradise. Mohammed took this idea from Judaism. The Jews borrowed this idea from the Zoroastrians.

The Mohammedan conception of God agrees almost exacty with the Jewish notion. The doctrine that there are two powers in the world, a good and benevolent power, viz., God, and an evil and malevolent power, viz., Satan, is also taken from the Jews. This idea was borrowed by the Jews from the Zoroastrians who call these two powers as Spenta Mainyu and Angira Mainyu. The Zoroastrians borrowed this idea from a beautiful allegory in the Vedas which describes the struggle of good and evil in this world.

The doctrines of Christianity are all taken from Judaism. There is a Buddhist element in Christianity. The moral precepts and teachings of Buddhism have much in common with those of Christianity. Buddhism in Syria was a preparation of the religion preached by Lord Jesus. Buddhism prevailed in Palestine when Christ was born. There had been a channel of communication between Buddhism and Christiarity.

Christianity owes to Buddhism for its high morality. The ethical precepts of Lord Jesus are based on Buddhism as preached in Palestine by the Essences, when Jesus was born.

The doctrines of Christianity are based on Judaism and its moral precepts on Buddhism.

Buddhism sprang up directly from Hinduism. Buddha was a rebel child of Hinduism. He made subtle analysis of the world and prescribed different kinds of Sadhana or forty kinds of concentration, for eradicating Trishna (craving) for self-culture and self-restraint and attaining Nirvana. This is a special feature of Buddhism. He did not preach anything new. He advocated the practice of virtues or the noble eightfold path. Buddhism has an excellent system of morality.

Judaism is based on Zoroastrianism. The conception of God (Ahuramazda) of Zoroaster is perfectly identical with the notion of Jehova of Jews. The Jews have got the idea of two powers, viz., God and the Devil. The Jews believe in Angels, resurrection, Day of Judgment, weighing of the actions of man in the balance, future life, heaven and hell. There is a similarity in the Parsi and Jewish accounts of hell.

Zoroastrianism is based on Hinduism. There is a similarity between the Vedic and Zend languages. The doctrines and ceremonies of Zoroastrianism have a remarkable similarity to those of the Vedas. The doctrine of metempsychosis is included in the Zoroastrian sacred books.

Hinduism is Vedic religion. All truths are ultimately traceable to the Vedas. The stream of religion has flowed into the world from the Vedas, as its fountain-head through the channels of the ZendAvesta, the Bible and the Koran. Vedas are the ultimate source to which all religious knowledge can be traced. The founders and teachers of all other religions have drawn their inspiration from the Vedas and the Vedic Rishis and brought light and peace to all mankind.

All religions have taken their origin in the continent of Asia. South Asiz gave birth to four religions, viz., Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. In Eastern Asia, China produced Confucianism and Taoism. In Japan Shintoism took its birth. Western Asia gave birth to Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Zoroastrianism took their origin in 6th Century B.C. Judaism in 13th century B.C. Jainism in 6th century B.C. Christianity in A.D. 30; Islam in A.D. 622; Sikhism in 15th century A.D.

Whatever may be the date of origin of the various religions and the number of their followers, it will be foolish to claim superiority of one over another.

The number of followers in Hinduism is 300,000,000; in Buddhism 520,000,000; in Christianity 500,000,000; Judaism 16,000,000; Mohammedanism 300,000,000; Jainism 1,450,000; Sikhism 5,700,000; Zoroastrianism 125,000 Shintoism 17,000,000; Confucianism 400,000,000.

Dynamism is a fundamental aspect of religion. No religion can afford to be static. Evolution is the law of nature. Human thought is ever progressive. Hence, primitive beliefs, thoughts, evaluations and sentiments have to adjust themselves with the progress of time in order to make religion a living reality in the conduct and aspiration of humanity.

13. ESSENTIALS AND NON-ESSENTIALS OF RELIGION

Religion is the link between man and God. Every religion always establishes a relation between man and God or Infinite. Religion should give shelter even for the worst type of sinner. It must be perfectly tolerant, broad and catholic.

Religion lays down the laws of life. Religion teaches us how to lead a divine life. Man cannot progress spiritually without religion, just as a tree cannot grow without water and manure. Religion is the support that helps us in climbing the steep and narrow ladder of emancipation. It is the most important factor that helps the earnest spiritual aspirants in understanding the principles of oneness of life and Universal love.

There is a supreme Lord, who is all-pervading immortal, infinite, omnipotent, omniscient, eternal, perfect, ever-pure, self-existent, all-merciful, all blissful. We can attain eternal bliss, immortality and everlasting peace by attaining God-realisation. All religions admit this unanimously. This is the essential part of all religions.

To attain Godhead one should be truthful, humble, pure, compassionate, dispassionate, forgiving, tolerant, unselfish, desireless, 'I'-less, 'mine'-less, generous, charitable. All religions admit this unanimously. This is the essential of all religions.

Those who want to lead the divine life, should be free from lust, greed, anger, hatred, jealousy, pride, selfishness, egoism, hypocrisy etc. All religions admít this unanimously. This is the essential of all religions.

To realise God one should develop love. He should have ethical perfection, self-restraint, the spirit of self-sacrifice, good conduct, devotion to saints and God. He should study the holy scriptures and have perfect faith in the existence of God, in the scriptures and in the words of the spiritual preceptor. All religions admit this unanimously. This is the essential of all religions.

To come face to face with God one should pray and meditate regularly. He should be in the company of the saints. He should serve the saints, the poor and the sick. He should lead a simple life and avoid all luxuries and should fast when the senses become turbulent. He should control the senses, reduce the wants and subjugate the mind. All religions admit this unanimously. This is the essential of all religions.

To commit adultery is a sin. To rob other's property is a vicious action. To tell lies is bad. To hate others is wrong. To kill another man is a crime. All these evil deeds will bring down a man to the level of a brute and throw him in infernal regions. All religions admit this unanimously.

You must be able to differentiate the essentials from the non-essentials in religion and philosophy, through the power of pure reason and discrimination. Then only you can be happy. The essentials of all religions are one and the same. They all agree. Religions differ only in non-essentials.

You may dress in simple clothing in any way you like. You may eat simple food in any way you like. You may dress your hair any way you like. These have nothing to do with meditation, Real religion and philosophy is beyond the senses and intellect.

Real religion begins when one has gone above the body-consciousness. Real religion begins when one has gone beyond the petty customs, manners and conventions. These are all meaningless social bindings. They have nothing to do for a man who has expanded himself.

Be catholic, and liberal in your views. Expand. Ignore trifles. Rise above the petty customs, ceremonies, touchism and kitchenism and markism. Look to the internal fundamentals or essentials. Ignore non-

essentials. Unite with all. Put out anything that separates you from your neighbours. Then you will find the unity of religion, unity of philosophy, unity of Self. Then and then alone you will be in bliss and knowledge.

The ideals and principles of all the religions are always noble. But practice needs sincerity, which is rarely found among us. Many preach Buddhism, but no one gives up desires and Himsa. Many preach Christianity, but no love and forgiveness. Many preach Islam, but no one practises one recognises the brotherhood of man. Many preach Hinduism but no one realises the divinity in all. Hence the world is wicked, not for want of truths, nor on account of religions; but alas 1 it is wicked for the lack of true followers of these ideals and religions. If everybody instead of suggesting or promulgating these old old truths, practises them, he can alone do much benefit to the world. Practice instils truths into the hearts of men, whereas preaching amuses their ears. Preaching has become the livelihood of men while practice has become their object of scorn.

May you all have a comprehensive understanding of the essentials of all religions! May you all learn to discriminate between the essentials and nonessentials of all religions! May you all recognize the essential unity of all religions and thus lead a life of perfect tolerance, happiness and bliss!

14. UNIVERSALITY OF RELIGION

May the joy of oneness and the peace of Goodwill infill you all!

In this world of phenomenon, the general rule is that the subtle is veiled or covered over by the gross. The truth or the inner essence of anything is hidden by its outward appearance. The”Tattwa,’ is hidden by the ‘Nama, and ‘Rupa; To perceive the inner truth, the underlying essence, you will have to combine observation with discrimination and impartial enquiry. If you fail to do this you will get but a superficial glimpse of things and miss the substance thereof. Religion is no exception to this rule. The real import is not properly understood by a great many. Precisely because of the above-mentioned reason. The sincere inquiry into the true implication of religion is conspicuous by its absence. Thus rek. Gion, from being rightly understood in its true light as the greatest common factor and universally unifying force in the world, has come to be misunderstood and misconstrued as a disruptive element that is at the bottom of many a quarrel, conflict and warfare too. Many would readily quote history, remote as well as recent, to support this opinion. The term universality with reference to religion will perhaps evoke a sceptic smile in many. I would lauga at such scepticism, for, they err in the same way as a man seeing a coloured Diwali lamp takes the external coloured glass to be the real lamp and fails to perceive the pure light.

The Fundamental Urge

Universality is the greatest characteristic of true ligion. This fact is not effected by the vote or opinion the non-discriminating man. When I say true reli ton I mean religion in its pure essentials and not its conventional conceptions. The universality of religion does not lie in the rituals, external marks or traditional observations nor in the personal apparel and social customs adopted by followers of particular aspects of religious life. These are but its ever changeable sut face appearances. But a little reflection and inquiry will reveal to us the unmistakable truth that religion is the root impulse in the heart of every human being. Religious sense is one that is common to the entire mankind, because this religious sense or religious feeling springs out of the very fact of your being a man. At its basis religion constitutes the primal spiritual ‘urge’ to self-awareness of the eternal principle in man. This principle throbs in the heart of all. All the religions and faiths that ever existed and exist today are but slightly varying processes for the development and consummation of this fundamental universal urge towards the one Infinite source

and origin of all life. It is, therefore, the one fundamental aspect of human consciousness. All the other aspects of man's consciousness such as that of sex, age, caste, parentage, pedigree and power, religious group or political party, are acquired by the individual later on in life as he grows up and develops individuality and becomes an adult. These aspects depend upon factors external to him. They change when things change. They also change when the individual alters his thoughts, mode of living, or his philosophy and view of life. A Hindu youth falls in love with and marries a Christian girl. He begins to live and move like a Christian. An Indonesian lady marries a Hindu and begins to feel entirely like a Hindu lady. A Japanese professor domiciled in America voluntarily becomes a citizen of U.S.A. After some years he becomes oblivious of his previous political consciousness. Count Leo Tolstoy, the high nobleman, completely transformed himself into a peasant We see how these outer layers of Upadhis as the Sanskrit term goes) are easily shed by man as they are later acquired from this world. But you cannot shake off your Soul-consciousness, as this matter springs from the depths of your nature within and real religion is the method of awakening and making manifest this Soul-consciouness. At different times in human history divinely inspired beings, the prophets and world teachers appeared and presented this self. Same method of inward awakening and attainment in a form peculiarly suited to the need of the people of that time. But always the aim and the inner process has been, now is and will for ever be the same to all mankind everywhere and at all times.

Moral Rectitude, the Foundation

The spiritual being of man is Atman. This Atman is Sat-Chit-Ananda. It is also ineffable peace "Ayam Atma Shanto, Shantam, Shivam, Shubham, Sundaram, Advaitam" peaceful, auspicious, the best, beauty, radiance, non-dual; such is the nature of the Atmic experience. To manifest these is, therefore, the essence of true religion. It is the concern of religion to eliminate the evil in man's personality, to develop in himself all that is sublime, good, auspicious and beautiful. Religion does this by first laying down upon the seeker the practice of a perfect good life. All religion is based on the foundation of Sadachara. Moral rectitude and ethical perfection form the universal basis of every religion the world has seen so far. Be good, do good, be kind, be pure, love, give form its prime principles. One important aspect of universality is thus found in the starting rungs of its practical ascent. The beautiful anecdote of Abu-ben-Adam, the moving story of Ranti Deva, the biblical narrative of the good Samaritan and the sublime depiction of Gautama the Buddha at the sacrifice of King Bimbisara, all serve to bring out most beautifully and effectively the universal nature of the true essential religious consciousness. The unvarying insistence upon the practical acquirement of the Daivi Sampat or godly traits like purity, truth, compassion, universal love, forbearance, humility, absence of anger, spirit of brotherhood, selfdenial, selfless service and sacrifice form yet another beautiful golden bond of universalism in practical religious life. The conquest of brute passion, of lust and sensuality, control of the senses and the renunciation of greed, covetousness, attachments, desires, of pride and egoism which go to form the indispensable part of practical religion, are further aspects of Universal prevalence in the true religious life.

Expression of the Inner Self

Real religion awakens man to the consciousness of the unity of all existence and a perception of one Spiritual. Essence that pervades everywhere, and in dwells-every being. To bestow the highest perfection. The highest knowledge and the highest bliss of Selfexperience is the meaning of life. The craving for knowledge, for undiminishing joy and, abiding peace is in herent in every human being The unceasing struggle consciously or otherwise, to attain the above state is part and parcel of life. To bestow the bliss of this attainment is the main concern of religion. Thus its universality is seen in the fact of its being the root. Urge throbbing in the heart of all humankind and human life being the active expression of this urge. Its universality further lies in the fact that in its fundamentals the round-up of world religions reveals but a

single, simple pathway to blissful unity, the pathway to peace, here and hereafter to brotherhood and universal self. Hood. 'Isha Vasyam idam Sarvam' 'Sarvam Brahma Mayam', are expressions of this experience. The religious sense therefore makes all mankind kin. It enfolds all mankind in a warm embrace of spiritual oneness, Such unification alone could be vital, effective and abiding, for through religion you link up man at the deepest abiding and essential root-part of his spiritual personality. This consciousness interpenetrates entire humanity like a beautiful golden thread running silently through all the numerous beads of variegated hue that go to make a necklace. No conflict or divergence in any superficial part of man has any power to mar this sweet spiritual unity, if only you wake up to a full appreciation of this fundamental fact. When religion is thus perceived in its true essence, then the Christian, the Muslim, the Buddhist, the Jain and the Parsee will feel themselves not as any particular religionists but as brother souls proceeding together in perfect harmony along the path way to perfection and bliss. They will feel their identity of aspiration, of the inner Sadhana and the identity of their spiritual aim. The right view of religion will unfailingly make it intima powerful unifying factor by making entire mankind -feel as one through perfect identity of aspiration, endeavour, and ultimate attainment.

Blessed Self, understand therefore, that true import of religion. Know religion in its proper light. Let not personal bias, force of conventions, or opinions of fanatic or dogmatic persons blind your vision into a narrow view of religion. Embrace, therefore, this religion of heart that helps to link you with one common source and origin of all existence. Religion is one for all human beings. It is one, universal and eternal. May peace, oneness, and bliss be yours. May the one God, the Supreme Being lead us all from the unreal to the Real, from darkness to Light, from mortality to Immortality.

Universality of Religion

The truth of the inner essence of religion is often hidden by its outward appearance. To perceive the inner truth one should combine observation and impartial inquiry.

Sincere inquiry into the true implication of religion is conspicuous by its absence. Thus religion from being rightly understood in its correct perspective has come to be very much misunderstood.

Universality is the greatest characteristic of true teligion in its essentials, and does not lie in the rituals of any particular aspect of religious life. Religion is the root-impulse in the heart of every human being.

Real religion awakens man to the consciousness of the unity of all existence through the medium ofa common God that pervades everywhere and indwells every being.

The craving for knowledge, for undiminishing joy and abiding peace is inherent in every soul To bestow this attainment is the main concern of religion.

Religion without tolerance and respect for other faiths is a menace to society. Sectarian religion, with special preference for some of its followers, has no place in the present age.

Pathways to Perfection

All religions are but slightly varying process for the development and consummation of a fundamental and universal impetus toward the one infinite source of all life.

Real Religion is the method of awakening and manifesting the soul-consciousness.

It is the concern of every religion to eliminate the evil in man, to develop in himself all that is noble, good, auspicious, beneficial and beautiful. Religion does this by first laying down upon the seeker the practice of a good and virtuous life.

Moral rectitude and ethical perfection form the universal basis of every religion the world has know so far.

Self-culture is another name of religion. The col quest of brute passions and control of the senses are other aspects of the truly religious life.

The signs of a religious man is that he is less selfish, less egoistic, more tolerant, humble and dignified, catholic in outlook, broad-hearted and introvert. He has a greater restraint over his emotions, impulses, greed and lust than the ordinary man.

Do Not Be Blind

Mass education alone can ensure religious harmony and a progressive social life from the point of view of universal religion.

When religion is perceived in the proper light, then the Christian, the Hindu, the Buddhist, the Muslim and the Jew will feel themselves not as any particuarl religionists but as brother souls proceeding together along the path of harmony and self culture towards greater evolution and happier existence.

The right view of religion will unfailingly make a powerful, unifying contribution toward world solidarity and peace through identity of aspiration, endeavour and ultimate fulfilment.

Individuality is also quite necessary, but that should not cause discord.

No materialistic force can annihilate the religious urge in man, though for a time a certain kind of propaganda may serve as a deterrent.

A particular religion does not need to be championed by a government. What is wanted is the recognition of the universal tenets of religion and their inclusion in the educational curriculum,

Let not personal bias, force of convention, or the opinion of fanatics and sectarians blind your vision into a narrow view of religion. Do not be prejudiced by observing the religious practices of untutored masses.

Do not mix up politics with religion. Let not one overlap the other. Religion is your personal affair. Do not believe in fantastic promises. Practise what you can. Live in the present. Live the day well.

CHAPTER THREE

POEMS ON UNITY OF RELIGIONS

15. UNITY OF RELIGIONS

Religion is the basis of life.

It is the basis of all noble human endeavours,

Understand the essential unity of all religions

That underlies all apparent differences.

Get rid of all superstitious accretions.

Devise methods for putting into practice

The recognition of sweet unity.

Conduct parliament of Religions.

On the common platform.

Hold common prayers.

Bring all the leaders of all faiths

Deal with the practical side of religion.

Bring spiritual regeneration,

Peace, unity, harmony and concord.

16. ONE CASTE ONE RELIGION ONE GOD

There is only one caste,

The caste of humanity.

There is only one Religion,

The Religion of Love, or the Religion of Vedanta

There is only one Dharma,

The Dharma of Truthfulness.

There is only one Law,

The law of Cause and Effect.

There is only one God,

The omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent Lord.

There is only one Language,

The language of Silence, or the language of the heart.

17. ESSENTIALS OF RELIGION

There is one Supreme Being.

He is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent.

He is Existence, Knowledge, and Bliss Absolute.

He is the Indweller of all beings.

In Him alone can we find eternal bliss,

Everlasting peace and immortality.

Attain Him through self-realization,

Purification of heart, faith, devotion,

And ceaseless meditation.

Share what you have with others.

Love all, serve all, be kind to all.

Feel His presence everywhere.

These are the essentials of all religions.

18. TRUE RELIGION

Kill egoism, likes and dislikes.

Annihilate lust, pride, and anger.

Cultivate divine virtues.

Abandon evil qualities.

Control the senses and the mind.

Give up desires, cravings and “mine-ness.”

Have perfect faith in God,

In the Scriptures and in the words of your Guru.

Practise non-injury, truthfulness and celibacy.

Enquire “Who am I? Know the self, and be free.

This is true religion.

19. ONE ESSENCE

Behind all names and forms

Is the one nameless, formless Essence,

Behind all governors Is the one Supreme Governor of governors.

Behind all sounds

There is the soundless Supreme Silence.

Behind all teachers

Behind all lights Is the one Light of lights.

Is the one, Supreme Guru of Gurus.

Thou art That, Tat Twam Asi. O Ram!

Behind all these perishable objects

Is the one, imperishable Absolute.

Behind all these motions

Is the one, motionless Infinite.

Behind time, minutes and days,

Is the one, timeless Eternity.

Behind hatred, riots and wars

Is the one, hidden Love.

Thou art That, Tat Twam Asi, O Ram!

20. ESSENCE OF RELIGION

The essence of religion

Is tolerance and Self-realization.

Not marks on the forehead,

Not the matted locks and long beard.

Not standing in hot sun and cold water,

Not the orange-coloured robe,

Not the shaven head,

Not ringing bells,

Not blowing the conch,

Not playing the cymbals,

But a life of goodness, purity and service

In the midst of mundane temptations.

21. REAL RELIGION

To be just, to be friendly to everyone.

To be sincere and true to one self,

To meditate on the immortal Self within,

To be good and to do good to all,

And make others happy,

To comfort the sick and the afflicted,

To serve the poor, Is the real religion.

Real religion is not observance

Of the outward formalities,

Or a mere intellectual assent

To a certain creed or dogma.

It is realization and becoming.

He who has equal vision and balanced mind

Under all conditions and circumstances

Is truly religious.

22. ESSENTIALS OF ALL RELIGIONS ARE THE SAME

The fundamentals of all religions are the same,

Only the non-essentials differ.

Buddhism professes the noble Eightfold Path.

It corresponds to the Sadachara,

Or the Code of Righteous Conduct professed by Hinduism.

The Sermon on the Mount in the Bible

Corresponds to the noble Eightfold Path of Buddhism,

And the Sadachara of Hinduism.

All these aim at ethical perfection.

“There is God, or a Supreme Being.

In Him alone you will find supreme peace Eternal Bliss, Freedom, Perfection, and Immortality.

Never hurt others’ feelings. Speak the Truth. Do not kill any sentient being

Cultivate divine virtues such as humility, courage.

Forgiveness, tolerance, and compassion Love all. Be kind to all.

Be good, do good, do charity. Purify the heart. Serve humanity.

Share what you have with others.

Love thy neighbour as thy own self.

Cultivate universal brotherhood.

Destroy all barriers that separate man from man.”

These are the essentials of all religions.

23. WORLD’S RELIGION

All religions are one.

Religion has many doors.

Religion shows the way to God.

The source for religion is God.

O Man! Do not fight.

Do not enter into discussions.

Practise religion,

And attain the goal of religion.

Brahman, Allah, Jehovah, Ahuramazda, are one.

Truth is One.

Sages call it by different names.

Prophets appear in different ages.

To emphasize the oneness of truth.

Their teachings are basically the same.

It is ignorance that divides.

Be tolerant towards all religions.

Respect all prophets.

Behold the one Truth in all.

24. RAM OR RAHIM

Ram or Rahim is the same for me.

I accept and respect all saints and prophets.

I respect all Gurus and Friars.

I find Truth in all religions.

Krishna or Karim is the same for me.

God or Allah is the same for me.

Ahuramazda or Jehovah is the same for me.

Christ or Krishna is the same for me.

25. SONG OF UNIVERSALITY OF RELIGIONS

I. What is Religion

Religion is pathway to peace and Brotherhood.

Religion shows the way to God-realization.

Religion is a bond between God and man.

Religion has the tremendous force of transforming character.

Religion is better understood when it is more and more practised.

Without religion there can be no morality or

Spirituality.

A life without religion is a dreary waste and death.

Education without religion is not worth the name.

II. The One Religion

There is only one religion, the religion of love.

There is only one religion, the religion of the heart.

There is only one religion, the religion of Vedanta.

There is only one religion, the religion of unity or oneness.

III. Real Religion

Real religion is above mind and senses.

Real religion is Self-realization.

The essence of religion is divine experience.

The essence of religion is love and unity.

IV. Unity in Diversity

Brahman, Allah, Krishna, Khuda, Ahuramazda,

Jehova, Shinto, Tao, Buddha, Zoroaster,

Jesus Christ, Mahavir, Confucius,

All are essentially one and the same.

Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanti

Truth is one, sages call it by different names.

V. Universal Religious Teaching

The essentials of all religions are the same.

Serve, love, give, purify, meditate, realize;

Be good, do good, be kind, be compassionate;

Enquire “Who am I?”, know the Self, and be free;

Love all, serve all, serve the Lord in all;

Speak the truth, be pure, be humble;

Concentrate, meditate, attain Self-realization:

These are the essentials of all religions.

Customs, conventions, ceremonies are nonessentials.

Do not fight over petty non-essentials.

Prayer, fasting, charity and pilgrimage

Are the first steps in all religions.

Be tolerant, be catholic, have a broad outlook,

Respect all prophets, all saints, all messengers;

All saints speak the same language.

CHAPTER FOUR

COMPARATIVE RELIGION

26. MAHAVAKYAS OF RELIGIONS

Life is something grand and majestic, full of meaning and purpose. It has a profound philosophy and a grand goal. It is an immortal dance of beauty on the stage of eternal truth and goodness. It is a self-luminous luminosity, a self-sufficient entity. It is wisdom to know and speak of life as a realm of reality and a centre of joy in itself. This truth of life cannot be proved by the help of our senses or by anything in the phenomenal world, but can only be experienced in the deepest recess of one's own heart of awareness.

The very nature of the individual life is to expand itself into the unlimited vastness of the Infinite, to be seated in the heart of all, to govern the life of all, to rule the universe from within, to wield perfect power and bliss.

The purpose of our life here is to dance to the rhythm of the beat of the Eternal Heart of the Supreme Beloved, to become identical with the Light of Truth and thus live the fullest life, the divine life, a life in God, breathing eternal youth and unfading freshness, moving in limitless wisdom and peace.

Every phase of life has in it some poetry; every facet of life glows with the Eternal light of Truth: every storm and stress of life is rich with the splendour of spiritual glory. The whole world is throbbing with the consciousness of God who is the source and end of all that is. Man's duty consists in being in harmony with this all-pervading principle of God.

This innermost immanent principle within all existence the highest spiritual consciousness that is latent in all, is a pure unity without parts, a unique homogeneity admitting of no differences. To guide and help us to experience this One Undivided Essence, the immortal masters of all religions have handed down to us beacon lights of Mahavakyas or great utterances embodying their innermost experience, which contain in themselves the quintessence of all the spiritual wisdom necessary for the world. A few are given for comparison and meditation.

Buddhism..... Buddham Saranam Gacchami. Dharmam Saranam Gacchami. Sangham Saranam Gacchami

Christianity....."I and my Father are One",

Confucianism..... The three secrets of happiness are to see no evil, to hear no evil, and to do no evil.

Hinduism......Tat Twam Asi-"That thou art".

Jainism...... Ahimsa Paramo Dharma-Non injury is the highest religion.

Judaism .....Be still and know that I am God.

Mohammadenism..... La Illaha Illullah-Mohammed Rasullullah. There is no God but Allahand Mohammed Messenger of Allah. Is the

Sikhism..... Ek Omkar, Satnam There is but one God. His Name is Truth.

Sufism...... .Anal Haq, "I am God."

Shintoism......Prayer is of the foremost importance in appealing for the Divine Grace.

Taoism...... Tao is everywhere. It is priceless treasure. It is the Guardian and Saviour. It is the Sanctuary where all beings find refuge.

Zoroastrianism.....He is but the same one God, but men give Him diverse names. Hoomta, Hookta, Havareshta, Mansni, Gavasni, Kunasni. Pure thought, pure words, pure deeds.

These Mahavakyas summarise and reveal the central truth in all religions, the essence of all paths to perfection, the goal of all wisdom and spiritual practices, of the oneness of life and self and of the nature of Truth, which is free from all change, impersonal and all-pervading.

These Mahavakyas or great sentences, are the master key to the manifestation of the perfection of the soul, the unveiling of the Essential Nature of the Self. A continuous repetition of any one of these Mahavakyas awakens the inherent spiritual consciousness within us. Profound meditation on these Mahavakyas generates a tremendous force in life which results in the realisation of Truth or the Absolute.

27. THE GOLDEN RULE OF BROTHERHOOD

Collected by Salah-Ad-Dien. D.D., Ph. D.,A. Auburn N. S. W.

Gautam Buddha: Hatred ceaseth not by hatred. Hatred ceaseth by love. This is the everlasting law.

Confucianism: Is there any maxim which ought to be acted upon throughout one's whole life? Surely the maxim of loving kindness is such: Do not unto others what you would not they should do unto you.

All within the four seas are brothers, how then can a fine man grieve that he is without a brother.

Mahatma Gandhi: I am a believer in the truth of all the great religions of the world. There will be no lasting peace on earth unless we learn not merely to tolerate but to appreciate the other faiths as our own. A reverent study of the different Teachers of mankind is a step in the direction of such mutual respect.

Robert Ingersoll: My creed is this: Happiness is the only good. The place to be happy is here. The time to be happy is now. The way to be happy is to make others so.

Christianity: Love the Lord thy God with your whole heart, and with your whole Soul, and with your whole strength, and with your whole intellect, and your neighbour as yourself. Do that, and you will live. What, therefore, you wish men to do to you, do the same yourselves to them for this is the law and the prophets.

If anyone says, "I love God," yet hate his brother, he is a liar; because whoever does not love his brother whom he has seen, he can not love God whom he has not seen.

God has made of one blood all nations of men.

Hinduism: This is the sum of duty; do naught to others which if done to you would cause you pain.

Kine are of diverse colours, but all milk is alike; systems of faith are different, but the Deity is One.

Knowledge-KNOW EACH OTHER, Goodness-

LOVE YOUR BROTHER

John Wesley: Do all the good you can; by all the

Means you can; in all the ways you can; in all the places you can; at all the times you can; to all the people you can; as long as ever you can.

Benjamin Franklin: When you are good to others you are best to yourself.

Lilian Whiting: Let us grow out of the idea that because we do someone a favour or render him a service, that he is thereby under some transcendent obligation to us. Let us recognise the truth-that it is we who are obliged if he will permit us to do him a favour.

James Russell Lowell: No man is born into the world whose work is not born with him. There is always work, and tools to work with, and blessed are the horny hands of toil. The busy world shoves angrily aside the man who stands aside with arms akimbo until occasion tells him what to do; and he who wants to have his task marked out shall die and leave his errand unfulfilled.

Heywood Brown: Brotherhood is not a Biblical word. Out of comradeship can come and will come the happy life for all.

Edwin MARKHAM; There is a destiny which makes us brothers; none goes his way alone. All that we send into the lives of others comes back into our own.

Islam: Do unto all men as you would they should

Do unto you, and reject for others what you would reject for yourself. All creation is as God's family for its sustenance is from Him. The most beloved unto God is the person who does good to God's family. No one is a true believer until he loves for his brother that which he loves for himself. The best of God's children are those who, when seen, remind of God; and the worst of God's children are those who carry tales about, to do mischief and separate friends, and seek for the defects of the good.

Be kind to your neighbour. Draw the veil over him. Avoid injury. Look upon him with an eye of kindness.

If you see him doing evil, forgive him. If you see him doing good to you proclaim your thankfulness.

Lord Baden-Powell: Happiness is open to all, since, when you boil it down, it merely consists of contentment with what you have got and doing what you can for other people.

America's Ageless Words: With malice towards none; With charity for all; With firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right; Let us strive to finish the work we are in; To bind up the nation's wounds; To do all which may achieve a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

Taoism: Regard your neighbour's gain as your own gain; and regard your neighbour's loss as your own loss.

Zoroastrianism: That nature only is good when it shall not do to others whatever is not good for its own self.

Chinese Proverb: The broadminded see the Truth in different religions; the narrow minded see only their differences.

Alexander Pope:

All discords must to one Concord lead,

Whose every, missing note would leave a need;

A Concord, deep, unimagined as a world untrod,

An infinite Harmony whose name is God.

Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr

God grant me the serenity

To accept the things I cannot change :

The courage to change the things I can

And the wisdom to know the difference.

Edith Cavell :

I realise that patriotism is not enough.

I must have no hatred or bitterness in my heart.

Zoroaster: Doing good to others is not a duty. It is a joy, for it increases your own health and happiness.

Robert Ingersoll I belong to the Great Church which holds the world within its starlit aisles; that claims the great and good of every race and clime; that finds with joy the grain of gold in every creed, and floods with light the germs of good in every soul.

Judaism: Listen, Israel! Our Ever-Living God is a Single Life. Therefore love your Ever-Living God with all your heart, and with all your Soul, and with all your strength. You shall not hate your brothers in your heart. You shall not take revenge upon the child of your neighbours; but you shall love your neighbour as yourself. I am the Ever-Living. And let these words I command you today be in your heart; and teach them to your sons, and speak about them while sitting in your house and in travelling on your journeys and when lying down, and when rising up.

What is hurtful to yourself do not to your fellow man. That is the whole of the Torah and the remainder is but a commentary. Go learn it! Loving kindness is greater than law, and the charities of life are more than all ceremonies. Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us ?

Voltaire: The discovery of what is true, and the practice of that which is good, are the two most important objects of philosophy.

Sikhism: As you treat yourself so treat others. Then shall you become a partner in heaven. Regard all men as equal, since God's light is contained in the heart of each.

Jainism: A man should walk about treating all

Creatures as he himself would be treated. In happiness and suffering, in joy and grief, we should regard all creatures as we regard our own self, and should therefore refrain from inflicting upon others such injury as would appear undesirable to us if inflicted upon ourselves.

Rudyard Kipling :

East is East and West is West,

And never the twain shall meet.

But there is neither East nor

West Nor border nor Breed nor Birth,

When two strong men stand face to face,

Though they come from the ends of the Earth.

Emerson: The expectation of gratitude is mean and continuously punished by the total insensibility as the obliged person.

Lao Tsze: By the accident of good fortune a man may rule the world for a time. But by the virtue of love he may rule for ever.

Goethe's Mother: I always seek the good that is in people and leave the bad to Him who make mankind and knows how to round off the corners.

Horace Mann: Doing nothing for others is the Undoing of ourselves.

28. CONCEPTION OF GOD

Collected By Sri Duncan Greenless, M.A.

Advaita. God is all, the source and goal of all, which evolves from Him as an illusory universe, never really separate from His all-pervading mind. He is beyond all qualities, beyond all thoughts, and can be seen through the total silencing of thought as the one Self of all.

Visishtadvaita. God is and above all, the source and goal of all, who creates all as a play with the aid of His own Power. Formless, yet He is seen through forms; He has all qualities of infinite perfection. He manifests as Vyuha (deity) Avatara (incarnation) Archa (divine image), Antaryamin (Inner Ruler of every being).

Jainism. There is no God beyond the [perfection of man; He is the highest, the noblest, the fullest manifestation of all the powers which lie latent in the soul of man."

Hinayana Buddhism. The law (Dharma) that which 'really is' the ineffable 'Self' realized by the Buddha. This is but an inevitable Law, and the Truth is not concerned with a first cause or a last effect which are neither denied nor taught.

Mahayana Buddhism. The Reality is the void equally present in all beings, undefinable and unnegatable, realised by intuition, the eternal Buddha, in three aspects: (1) Dharınakaya, the one eternal Reality, absolute Truth and Being, the All; (2) Sambhogakaya, the personal God, an ideal Blissbody whereby teachings come to the saints as Lights and Wisdom, and (3) Nirmankaya, the physical body assumed by Avatara, both full and partial, as in Hinduism.

Egyptian. The Supreme Light known as Ra, manilestation of the infinite Atom, who by uttering the creative word, brought the whole universe into being, of the gods, men, animals, plants, stones, clouds and 50 on the Guardian and Ruler of all, one with the Inner Light in every being.

Mithraism. The unconquered Sun of heavenly Light, medial between earth and heaven, so mediator, friendly to souls (Mithra) Commander in the war on darkness, and Saviour from the body of death, He transmits the Havareno or "glory" so was eagerly worshipped by the Roman soldiers. Boundless Time, the Supreme First Cause, stands behind him.

Confucianism. The Light of Perfect, absolute reason or law in heaven, nature, the source and goal of all, and so the ideal of man; the real, truth, harmony, the silently active ruler and straight path, innate in all.

Taoism. Impersonal Tao, the eternal, omni. Present Being of Law, ineffable source and goal, who motivelessly and spontaneously works for universal good. Simple and invisible action-nonaction of force and beauty-this is the void or Abyss, manifesting as Yin (dark, female, passive) and Yang (bright, male, active) harmonised by Chhi (breath of life). The thrce jewels deified, are Lao tsze, Phanku and Yuhang Shang-ti.

Zarathusthrian. One Perfect being, infinite eternal, omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent, manifesting as Two Spirits of Light (Ahuramazda) and Dark (Anramainu) also the six Ameshaspentas: lovewisdom, purity-righteousress, royalty-power; grace, humility, devotion; perfection, fullness and immortality.

Jewish. God is one, the unique, eterral, king, judge, creator of all, formless spirit and ineffable name. Transcendent, independent source, demanding righteousness as He is Holy, guiding wisely and mightily all nations through history to His ends. He is the loving spouse of his own people.

Christian. Infinite, eternal, almighty, supra-personal, loving, holy, just creator-ruler of all, the source of life and light who can be reached through His creation and a dedicated righteous life. He is in three persons: the Unmanifest Father, the manifest Son, and the uniting spirit of Love-wisdom, Incarnation was His plan to overcome sin by taking the 'Karma' on His own body being one with all mystically. Founded the teaching Church to carry on the work for all time.

Muslim. Transcendent, infinitely great and almighty Creator, King, wise Providence, omniscient omnipresent Light. Lord of life and justice, king and pitiful guardian of souls.

Sufi. The only Real Being, eternal, everywhere revealed in creation to win Love for the Eternal Beauty, the real object of all love. No real evil exists, it is only the necessary condition to let the good manifest.

Sikh. One absolute, eternal, infinite; true, incomprehensible, yet manifested through his creation and by grace illuminating and never born, nameless, unmanifested, king, father, lover, pervading all, the Ocean of pure Being wherein all abide, the source and goal of all.

Stoic. The monistic all-pervading fire, the first cause, single, but made up of seed powers and pervaded by reason (Logos). A kindly providence and ruler at the same time one and many, the divine spirit of incorporeal wisdom.

Neo-platonic. One beyond all being and understanding, formless, permeating nature, spiritual knowable reality, a trinity of the good, the true and the beautiful of spirit, object of spiritual perception, ineffable creator of space and time.

Hermeti. One infinite, eternal, and ineffable reality, the deathless light and lifelin all, omnipresent sustaining ocean, unborn, formless and yet with form, nameless, and yet with names, such as God and Father, revealed through creation and by words expressing His eternal thought. He alone is good for He alone gives all, in whom is all beauty. He emanated man to seek Him through reason,

Manichean. Two roots or trees, Light-good, life and dark-evil-death. Azura, Father of greatness or light manifests as luminaries, five angelic powers of sense, reason, thought, imagination and will, and as wisdom or the religion. These five are personified as the glorious, the king of honour, the adamant one, the king of glory and the sustainer. God is a divine substance of Light not a person. The king of darkness manifests in smoke, fire, hot wind, poisonous water and gross darkness-an odious anarchy.

Cabbala God is in all, nothing is apart from Him. He willingly emanates the powers and remains infinite and unaffected; He does not create from nothing. Can be known only through negatives. Withdraws Himself to create in space; as a curved mirror changes the shape of an unchanged subject. So He is changeless, this first 'concentration' leads to others, and so the ten Sephiroth in three pairs. Desire is co-eternal with Him and all abides in Him, the spirit-origin and goal of all, infinite, simple indivisible, independent, radiating thought as the Primal will in all. Creation by

Alchemy. One monistic divine spirit immanent in man and matter.

Freemasonry. One impersonal great architect, in an abstract trinity of wisdom, strength, and beauty.

Spiritualism. Supreme intelligence, the infinite, eternal, changeless, unique first cause, just, good, omnipotent, unknown, but shown by reason as the perfect workman creator, Parent of all, can be felt and divined by lower spirits and known only by the Highest; He teaches all and guides all through higher grades of spiritual beings. Interested, He judges the intention more than the deed and His laws bring their inevitable result.

(Courtesy: Theosophical Society)

29. CONCURRENCE AMONG RELIGIONS

Here is a concurrence among the fundamentals of the important religions of the world:

The intuitional Hindu would say: "This TruthBrahman is All' is the Magna Carta of Absolute Freedom. Let a man think, let a man speak. Never mind if he makes errors: further knowledge will lead him right. He cannot wander outside the Self, for the Self is within him. Let the intellect soar as it will, upwards and upwards, as far as its wing can beat; still far beyond its powers, North and South and East and West: for Brahman stretches everywhere. The individual self being a manifestation of Brahman cannot therefore shake off the eternal certainty of Self-existence." **(Dr. Annie Besant's Kamla Lectures**)

And the Buddhists: "I did not say that there is not, and I did not say that there is. What is the use of speaking about existence of God? The Reality is so very Infinite that it is unwise to express that it is or is not. Live the right life. You will then know what really is". (**The Teachings Of Buddha**)

And the Christian: "There is one body and one spirit... one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God, and one Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all." (**The New Testament**)

And the Mohammedan: To everyone we have given a law and a way. And if God had pleased, he would have made you all one people (of one religion). But he hath done otherwise, that he might try you in that which He had severally given unto you, wherefore pass forward in good works. Unto God shall ye return and He will tell you that concerning which you disagree." (**The Al-Koran**)

And the Zoroastrian. "Have the religions of mankind no common ground? Broad indeed is the carpet which God has spread, and many are the colours which he has given it. Whatever road I take, joins the highway that leads to the Divine." (**Teachings of Zarathusthra**)

And the Chinese: This world is in a mysterious way the manifestation of that Infinite Tao (the Great). How this world came into being cannot be explained, but we can understand that there is only one Being." (Lao-tsze's Teachings)

30. COMPARATIVE SAYINGS FROM TWELVE RELIGIONS

(Collected by Prof. R. F. Piper. Ph. D., New York)

1. Hinduism. This is the high religion which wise men esteem; the life-giving breaths of other creatures are as dear to them as the breaths of one's own self. Men gifted with intelligence and purified souls should always treat others as they themselves wish to be treated. (Mahabharata)
2. The Hebrew Faith. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. (Leviticus)
3. Zoroastrianism. Him who is less than thee consider as an equal, and an equal as a superior, and a greater than him as a chieftain. (Sacred Books of the East)
4. Taoism. Regard your neighbour's gain as your own gain, and regard your neighbour's loss as your own loss. (Tai-Shang Kan-Ying Pie)
5. Jainism. Indifferent to worldly objects, a man should wander about treating all creatures in the world as he Limself would be treated. (Sacred Books of the East)
6. Buddhism. In five ways should a clansman minister to his friends and familiars:by generosity, courtesy and benevolence, by treating them as he treats himself, and by being as good as his words. (Sacred Books of the Buddhists)
7. Confucianism. Is there one word which may serve as a rule of practice for all one's life? The Master said, "Is not reciprocity (sympathy, consi. Deration) such word? What you do not want to be done to yourself, do not do to others". (Analects)
8. Christianity. All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law of the Prophets. (St. Mathew)
9. Islam. No one is a believer until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself. (An-nawavi)
10. Sikhism. As thou deemest thyself, so deem others; then shalt thou become a partner in heaven. (The Sikh Religion)
11. Tenrikyo Shinto. Irrespective of their nationa lity. Language, manners and culture, men should give mutual aid, and enjoy reciprocal, peaceful pleasure, by showing in their conduct that they are brethern. (Tenrikyo Doctrine)
12. ahai Faith. If thou lookest toward justice, choose thou for others what thou choosest for thyself. Blessed is he who prefers his brother before himself. (Bahai World Faith)
13. Primitivism. The good man never harms any self, either his own or another's. (Theodore P. Fabiyi)

31. THEORY OF CREATION

(Collected by Sri Duncan Greenless, M.A.)

Advaita. The world is an 'unreal' creation of the mind, and vanishes like a dream on waking, once the imaginative mind is transcended.

Visishtadvaita. The world is a manifestation of the Real God, and it is as real as Himself the scene of His eternal play.

Jainism. The world is non-living, and includes five Principles. (1) Matter in six states-solid, liquid, intangible, invisible, gaseous or imperceptible and atomic. (2) Motion-accompaniment, e.g. water for fish, (3) Rest-accompaniment, (4) Space in universe and beyond, (5) Time elaborately classified.

Hinayana (Buddhism). Matter (Rupa) is merely Force plus Quality (Extension, Cohesion, Heat, Cold, Motion, Colour, Taste, essence). Its essential nature is Misery, Transience and Soullessness. Mind is a complex of constantly fluctuating mental states, (Khandas) 52 in number.

Mahayana (Buddhism). Created by the ego-soul; when destroyed along with that ego, the Reality can be perceived. It is mind-caused, but has no beginning or end, for all is a ceaseless flow of change.

Egyptian. Magically produced by God's Will as the theatre of human and other life real and enduring for endless eternities.

Mithraism, Composed of the four great elements Earth, Water, Air and Fire.

Confucianism. Heaven and Earth are produced by Yin and Yang maintaining all beings and changing them into a state of perfection when poise and harmony among them are complete.

Taoism. Produced by the interaction of Yin and Yang under the influence of Chhi, it bore all creatures, The Heavenly Tao manifests as Nature, in eternal Law, and in the nature of each being. Because it is selfless, it endures for ever.

Zoroastrianism. Created by God's word (the Ahunavairya), the Law of all Righteousness, out of nothing. In two sectors Light-Good and Dark-Evil, ruled by God through Angels under Him, while evil creatures are under the control of Anramainyu, the Evil Spirit.

Judaism. Created by God's power through the utterance of a Word, as one united universe of Heaven and Earth ruled by Him alone. God is everywhere in it, so there is no demi-urge; there are no evil powers.

Christianity. Created from nothing as the scene of life and the school of men who are to be trained for cither Heaven or Hell. Animals having no responsible will or choice, can have no future, so too plants. Angels are also created to live in Heaven and to do God's will as pure spirits.

Islam. Created from nothing to manifest God's power and goodness through the expression of His Will in a single word. So it can be destroyed and made again when He Wills. Heaven and Hell are the abodes of the good and the wicked, at their own choice, and as the result of their own acts.

Sufism. Its final cause is Love, the essence of all religions. It is essentially good, even sin being a part of Good's perfection. Evil is a privation, non-being, a mere nothing. The Reality is One and Divine names reflect light on the darkness of the non-being.

Sikhism. It is good in itself, bad only it preferred to God. By God's will it is ceaselessly being made in countless planes, so that He might give Himself to beings in all blissfulness. It is real because pervaded by Him, the one Reality, but dreamlike because transient, arising in Him and then after ages passing away unto Him again.

(Courtesy:The Theosophical Society):

32. THE INDWELLING PRESENCE

(Collected by Sri Dr. R. F. Piper. Ph. D., New York)

1. **Primitivism.**

At first, for ever, lost in space, everywhere.

The great Manito (Supernatural Spirit) was.

He made the extended land and the sky.

He made the sun, moon the stars.

He made them all move evenly.

(Library of American Aboriginal Lit.)

2. **Hinduism.** This whole Universe is filled with this Person. He possesses that purest of power of reaching everything. His hands and feet are everywhere; He stands encompassing all the world.

(Svetasvatara Upanishad)

3. **Judaism**. The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch upon the evil and the good.

(Proverbs)

4. **Zoroastrianism**. The Eternal Lord of Wisdom (Ahuramazda) is the most prior Thinker, whose sparks are all-pervading in the limitless Light, and who through His wisdom is the creator and the sustainers of the immutable Law of order. (Yasna)

5. **Taoism**. What you call the Supreme Beings (Tao), where is it? There is nowhere where It is not. (Giles: Chuang Tzu)

6. **Northern Buddhism**. Like the blue sky, Buddha overarches every thing, and since he is all things, he lacks nothing. Buddha's body fills every corner of the world. It reaches everywhere; it exists forever. Its substance is Wisdom. (Dwight Goddard: Buddha and the Brotherhood)

7. **Confucianism.** Great Heaven is intelligent, And it is with you in all your goings. Great Heaven is clear-seeing, And is with you in all your wanderings. (Chinese Classics)

8. **Christianity**. In Him we live and move, and have our being. (St. Paul)

9. **Islam**. God created man and He knows what his soul whispers, for He is nearer to Him than his Jugular vein, (Koran)

10. **Sikhism**. The Searcher of hearts contains in everything. God pervadeth the continent, the islands, the nether regions, the universe and all the worlds. (M. A. Nacullife)

11. **Tenrykyo Shinto**. (a) When the sky is clear, and the wind hums in the fir trees, it's the heart of God who thus reveals Himself (b) The universe is the body of the Deity. This Law (of Heavenly reason) exists and acts in every quarter of the universe as the expression of the eternal vitality. (a) Aston Shinto (b) Tenrikyo Doctrine

12. **Bahai Faith**. (a) The mirror of God's knowledge reflecteth with complete distinctness, precision and fidelity, the doings of all men. (b) The divine breath animates and pervades all things. (c) God is closer to man than his own self. (Bahai world Faith)

13. **Jainism.** Lord Jina is seen in all the three worlds. In the omniscient knowledge of Jina, the world is reflected. That supreme and perfect soul resides in one's heart. (Pahuda-Doha)

33. THE LAW OF KARMA

(Collected by Dr. R. F. Piper. Ph. D., New York)

Hinduism. As is a person's desire, so is his will, and as is his will, so is his deed (Karma) and whatever deeds he does that will he reap. (Brihadaranyak Upanishad)

Judaism. Be sure your sin will find you out.

Zoroastrianism. At the beginning of Life, the Lord of Eternal Light didst establish proper compensations for deeds and words: a bad compensation for the bad, and a good compensation for the good. (Yasna 43.5)

Taoism. Reward of good and evil follows as the shadow follows the object.

Jainism. Every good will bear its fruit to the doer. Misery arises from wicked deeds. In this life and the next, people cannot escape the effects of their own actions. (Sacred Books of the East)

Buddhism. By the divine vision a monk doth see creatures that have fallen and have arisen, that are low and exalted. Comely and ill-favoured, fortunate and unfortunate, and he doth recognize that creatures follow the destiny of their deeds. (JH. Moore: Sayings of Buddha)

Confucianism Good and evil do not wrongly befall men, but Heaven sends down misery or happiness according to one's conduct. The way of Heaven is to bless the good and make the bad miserable. (Sacred Books of the East)

Christianity Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. (Galatians)

Islam. Every soul shall be recompensed for that which one has earned and no one shall be wronged. (Koran)

Sikhism As man soweth, so shall he reap, human life is lost without virtue. (M. A. Macauliff)

Tenrikyo Shinto. The souls of men vary in their fates; good fate is brought about when man's sincerity is in concord with God's. Bad fate is brought about when dirt accumulates in man's mind. (Tenrikyo Doctrine)

Bahai Faith. Naught is reaped but what is sown, and naught is taken but what is laid up, save by the Grace of God and His favour. Have we any good works whereby defects shall be removed of which shall bring us near unto the Lord of causes ? (Bahaullah)

34. ESSENCE OF DUTY

Hinduism

This is the essence of duty. Do not do to others what if done to you, you will dislike.

Buddhism

Do not do to others that which may give pain to your own self. Give that happiness for others which you want for your own self.

Christianity

Whatever you want that others should do to you, do that yourself to others. For this is the rule.

Islam

None becomes a true believer until he loves his brother even as he loves himself.

Zoroastrianism

That nature is really good when it will not do to others what is not good for itself.

Taoism

Consider that your neighbour's gain is your own and that your reighbour's loss is your own loss.

Confucianism

Do not do to others what you do not wish that others should do to you,

Sikhism

Consider others as you consider yourself.

Hebraism

Do not do to your fellow-men what is painful to yourself. Thus is the whole of the Torah and the remainder is only a commentary on it.

Jainism

We should consider in happiness and misery, in joy and grief, all beings as our own self, and therefore one should not do to others what would be undesirable for one's own self.

35. REVELATIONS

(Religious revelations and concepts are determined by the social background and the cultural traditions of the races, and the mental, moral and psychological attributes of the individuals. But there is always an essential unity of purpose, and that must be the basis for mutual understanding and community relationship. Here are some Great Utterances-ideal formulae for meditation.)

Buddhism: Give that happiness for others which you want for yourself.

Christianity: I and my Father in Heaven are one.

Confucianism: The three secrets of happiness are to see no evil, to hear no evil, and to do no evil.

Hinduism: Tat Twam Asi: That thou art.

Jainism: Non-injury is the highest religion.

Judaism: Be still and know the Lord.

Islam: There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is the messenger of Allah.

Sikhism: There is but one God; His name is Sat, or Truth.

Shintoism: Prayer is the foremost importance in appealing for the Divine Grace.

Sufism: Anal Haq: I am God.

Taoism: Tao is everywhere. It is the priceless treasure. It is the Guardian and Saviour. It is the sanctuary where all beings find refuge.

Zoroastrianism: He is but the same one God, but men have given Him diverse names. Homta, Hookta, Havareshta; Manasni, Gavasni, Kunasni -pure thought pure words, pure deeds.

36. "AHIMSA" OR NON-INJURY

1. Let not anyone injure life, but be as assiduous in cherishing the life of another as his own; for Ahimsa tis the highest religion.

-Tirthankara Mahavira (Jainism)

2. Let us for all creatures, great or small, develop boundless heart and mind, Aye, let us practise love for all the world.

-Gautama Buddha (Buddhism)

3. Thou shalt not kill.

-Jesus Christ (Christianity)

4. He who saveth a life, shall be as though he had saved all mankind; for there is no beast on earth, nor bird, which flieth with its wings but the same is a people like unto you.

-Mohammed (Islam)

5. A man should prefer good to harm, good deeds to sins, virtue to vice, light to darkness.

-Zoroaster (Zoroastrianism)

6. Is there any one maxim which ought to be acted upon throughout one's whole life? Surely, the maxim of loving kindness is such.

7. One Self dwells in all. All are manifestations of the one God. By injuring another you injure your own self. By serving another you serve your own self. Love all. Serve all. Hate none. Insult none. Injure none, in thought, word, or deed.

-Swami Sivananda (Hinduism)

37. BROTHERHOOD, COSMIC LOVE AND PEACE

Buddhism

1. Whosoever in this world harms living beings, and in whom there is no compassion for living beings, let one know him as an outcast. (Sutta-Nipata)
2. One act of pure love is greater than spending the whole of one's time in religious offering to the gods. (Dhammapada)
3. Those in whom wisdom and meditation meet. Are not far from peace. (Dhammapada)

Christianity

1. In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me. (Bible)
2. All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to ye, do ye even so unto them. (B)
3. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. (B)
4. And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, peace be to this house. (B)
5. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. (B)

Confucianism

1. All men are brothers, (Proverbs)
2. What you do not want done to yourself, do not dot oothers. (Analects)
3. Love makes a spot beautiful. Who chooses not to dwell in love, has he got wisdom? Love is the high nobility of Heaven, the peaceful home of man. To lack love is to lack wisdom. (Mencius)
4. Peace is worth a thousand talents of gold. (Proverb)

Hinduism

1. The whole world is pervaded by God. (Isopanishad)
2. Men gifted with intelligence should always treat others as they themselves wish to be treated. (Mahabharata)
3. He who beareth no ill to any being, friendly and compassionate, without attachment and egoism, balanced in pleasure and pain, and forgiving, he, my devotee, is dear to Me. (Bhagavad Gita)
4. The peace of the Chitta can be brought about through the practice of sympathy, tenderness, steadiness of purpose, and dispassion towards all forms of good or evil. (Patanjali Yogasutras)

Islam

1. No one of you is a believer until one loves for one's brother what one loves for oneself. (An-Nawawi)
2. Love is this that thou shouldst account thyself very little and God very great. (Sufi Saying)
3. The garment of peace never doth fade. (Saying)

Jainism

1. Towards your fellow-being be not hostile. (Sutra Kritanga)
2. Indifferent to worldly objects, a man should treat all creatures in the world as he himself wishes to be treated. (Jain Sutra)
3. Have compassion to all beings. (Jaina Sutra)
4. Attachment to false fleeting the purity of peace. Things stains (Saying)

Judaism

1. Thou shall not hate thy brother in thin heart. Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge, but thou shall love thy neighbour as thyself, (Leviticus)
2. But I say unto you: deeds of love are worth as much as all the commandments of the Law. (Talmud) 3. How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who bringeth good tidings, who publisheth peace. (Isaiah)

Shintoism

1. Irrespective of their nationality, language, manners and culture, men should give mutual aid and enjoy reciprocal, peaceful pleasure, by showing in their conduct that they are brethren. (Tenrikyo Doctrine)
2. We make loving kindness our Shintai representative. (Saying)
3. Peace to the land, safety to the household, and abundant harvest. (Prayer)

Sikhism

1. As thou deemest thyself, so deem others. (Granth saheb)
2. Deem the body in which there is no love a place of cremation. (Farid)
3. They love not who live in counting the favours and frowns of love. (Angad)

Taoism

1. Extend your help without seeking reward. (Kang Ying P'ien)
2. Regard your neighbour's gain, and your neighbour's loss as your own. (Kang Ying P'ien)

CHAPTER FIVE

ALL WORLD RELIGIONS' FEDERATION

38. UNITY FOR PERFECTION

(Inaugural Message of the All-World Religions' Fede ration. December 1945.)

Today we find various religions throughout the world having apparently widely divergent belief and practices. We are fully aware that the ideals, the purport and the goal of every religion are one and the same, that all religions attempt at the uplift of humanity from the base animalistic and incongruent existence in which we forget the higher noble mission of this precious life.

Association of religion with one's own free will, subjugation of ethical and moral culture to brutal force and physical might, have wrought the deterioration of the fundamental purport of religion, the main core of human existence. Excessive intellectual ratiocination, divergence from right interpretation of sacred texts, misguidance of the mass through wrong preaching with inapt analogies, have resulted in the direct and open charge that religion is blind orthodoxy.

This has to be completely wiped out from the minds of the common mass. By this we are not to conclude that religion is decadent. Religion never dies. It never requires rejuvenation at our hands. But we are responsible for the proper prescription. Religion outlives everything. There is no doubt about this.

It is the duty of the ecclesiastical heads to draw out persons from the wrong path. They are not to be aliowed to tread the wrong path. Instances are many even today where both the victor and the vanquished after long, dreary war-worn life approach men of religion for solace and salvation.

Now is the time to co-ordinate the different religions through reconciliation of the superficial differences, elimination of minor disputes; and establishment of one, universal religion of "God in Man, and Man in God."

39. ONE COMMON ORIGIN

(ALL WORLD RELIGIONS' FEDERATION Inauguration speech on the morning of 28 12-45)

Hari Om! In the beginning, Brahman or the Absolute alone existed. He was enjoying all Ananda by Himself. He wanted to multiply. If you have some sweetmeats and distribute them to others, how happy you feel! Even so Brahman wanted to share the Bliss with others and he wanted to multiply. There was the Brahma Sankalpa. There was a Spandan or vibration. This vibration is Om. Then the whole world came into being. All objects have come from Om. Every thing is Om only. All Languages have come from Om.

Om is the word of auspiciousness. Om is the word of wisdom. Lord Jesus says in the Bible (St. John) "In the beginning was the Word; the Word was with God and the Word itself was God."

You cannot think of a word or a name without an object. You repeat the word "cow" mentally and the image of the "cow" appears before the mind.

Chant Om now with Bhav and feeling three times.

All Mantras begin with Om. The priests begin the sacrifice or any religious function with Om-chanting. When you write a letter, you start writing with Om. We have chanted Om now. The All World Religions' Federation has been inaugurated now. I declare now that the All World Religions' Federation inaugurated.

All religions have come from Om. All religions are necessary in this world. Each prophet appeared on the platform to give his teaching according to the degree of evolution of the people amongst whom he lived. Lord Mohommed taught ethical lessons to the illiterate Arabs, who were rude, barbarous, who took delight in killing, robbing, and injuring others. Deep philosophy was not necessary at that time. It would have been quite useless if he started teaching "Brahma Sutras-Athato Brahma Jijnasa-now then an enquiry into Brahman". He taught them "Give charity. Love your neighbours. Have brotherly love for all men. Go to Mecca". This was more than sufficient.

The essentials of all religions are the same. Only non-essentials differ. "Real lasting happiness can be had in God. God is eternal, all-pervading, unchanging, omniscient, omnipotent. He is an embodiment of peace, bliss, knowledge. Love all. Serve all. Be pure. Be kind. Entertain sublime divine thoughts. Be truthful. Concentrate. Meditate. Realise." Every religion admits this. These are the essentials of every religion.

You must respect every prophet, every saint, every religious teacher. You may not have the same love and adoration for Lord Buddha or Lord Jesus or Lord Mahommed, as you have for Sri Sankara or Lord Krishna. But you will have to develop it. Naturally you are used to adore only certain forms. When you advance in spirituality, you must evince equal reverence for all prophets and saints. It is difficult to say from which source you draw inspiration at certain moments. It may be from the teachings of Guru Nanak or Lord Jesus or Lord Buddha or Lord Mohammed. Hence you will have to adore and revere every saint, prophet or religious teacher. Then only you will grow in spirituality and attain perfection.

The All-World Religions' Federation is only a new born baby now. It will soon assume a very huge form, a very big tree with countless branches to give shade and shelter for countless thirsting souls or weary pilgrims in this world. It will grow and develop quickly by the grace of the Lord. In the religious history of the world all freligious movements had only a small beginning. Gradually they developed. We will surely have more delegates next year.

We will publish all the articles we have received till now in the inauguration Volume of the Federation. This will be immensely useful to the people.

It is earnestly hoped that the All-World Religions' Federation will endeavour its level best to bring harmony, peace, goodwill and love amongst the people of different religions of the world and thus pave a long way towards the establishment of the Kingdom of God, peace and righteousness on this world.

May you all sit together talk together, work together, move together peacefully and happily! May you all attain God realisation in this very life and radiate joy and peace throughout the world is my humble prayer.

40. SECRET OF EFFECTING UNITY

(All world Religions' Federation. Lecture delivered By Swami Sivananda on 29-12-46)

To-day is the first Anniversary of this Federation. Today we are holding the third session of this Federation. The Federation has done great work within such a short space of time through the grace of the

Lord and the co-operation of the Members of Divine Life Society and other great men of the world at large.

Every citizen of the world should feel for the necessity of the unity of religions, which will pave a long way towards the peace of the world. This is a diverse world with people of different temperaments and diverse views. But there is one common Consciousness or Immortal Soul in all beings. The basis of unity of mankind must be spiritual. Then alone unity will be everlasting. Unity through politics, science, League of Nations and other social federations will not be permanent.

Though the world is crooked like the tail-end of a dog on account of the play of the Gunas, yet God sends from time to time great souls and Avataras to elevate people from the quagmire of Samsara and establish righteousness. Once again heaven is brought on this earth. Everywhere there is Satsang. People begin to do rigorous Sadhana and attain God-realisation. The disciples of the Mahatmas continue the work of their Masters and bring their teachings and writings in a book form. Thus the spiritual current is kept up.

You should not be discouraged in the beginning, because the work before us is an uphill work or stupendous task. You should not feel that the number of sincere workers at the present moment is not much. One sincere worker with Bhav, strength and earnestness amongst you is quite sufficient to bring the Federation to lofty heights and work for the solidarity of the world. It was one Sankara, one Jesus, one Buddha, one Gandhi, one Dayananda, one Vivekananda who did all the work. The invisible hand of the Lord is at the back of all good workers It is He who prompts, guides, and inspires the workers.

Hitler found a society with 12 persons only in the beginning. Millions joined later on. The congress was started with only five persons. It has become a tremendous body now and achieved the fruit of its endeavours. Hahnemann was single-handed when he brought before the public his new doctrine: “Similia similibus curantur-like things are cured by like’. But now his followers are numberless. Even many allopaths have become converts. The British came to India as ordinary merchants. Now their dominion is vast and limitless.

Wars can be put an end to only by religious unity. World peace can be effected only through the unity of religion. Man must be educated first. He must recognize that all are children of God. He must recognize and feel universal brotherhood. He must develop cosmic or universal love, through untiring service of humanity and remembrance of God. The League of Nations and All-World Religions’ Federation must be established in one’s heart first through the practice of Ahimsa, Satyam and Brahmacharya. Each man should be transformed. His Asuric nature must die in toto, through cultivation of divine qualities.

The task before you is very easy. You need not be frightened a bit at all. If every member of the Divine Life Society strives his level best to disseminate the message of goodwill, peace, and universal love and In make others realize the essential unity of all religions, if every teacher or professor or householder or any preacher of religion or religious head of any institution does the same in right earnest, then the work will become quite easy. Every man can start a small centre of the All-World Religions’ Federation in his Mohalla, village or lane or avenue with the right spirit of Bhav or attitude and right will. Five will become twenty-five. Twenty-five will become two hundred and fifty. Two hundred and fifty will become two thousand and five hundred. Two thousand and five hundred will become millions. Then the success is very near. You have already reached the goal. You have won the victory with laurels.

Understand the secret of effecting union. Rely on God. Have a comparative study of all religions and know the essential unity of all religions. Purify the heart. Persevere. Plod on. Be confident and courageous. Be faithful and enduring. You are bound to attain sanguine success.

May you all work sincerely for the peace of the world by establishing centres of the All World Religions' Federation in your own heart first and then in each village, town and city! May you all lead the Divine Life! May you all get established in the practice of Yama or right conduct which is the basis or bedrock for the life divine!

41. THE UNIVERSAL PIVOT

(All-World Religions' Federation Fourth Session, April 1947)

Today is the happy day of the fourth session of the All-World Religions' Federation.

The foundation of all religions is one. That foundation is Brahman or the Supreme Being.

Compassion is the root of religion. There is no virtue without religion. There is one friend, religion, who attends even in death while all things else go away to decay with the body.

Religion is the divinity within us reaching up the divinity above. It is the realisation of the Immortal

Self, hidden in man.

To control the mind and the senses, to cultivate virtues is to practise religion. Practice of Ahimsa (non injury) Satyam (Truthfulness) and Brahmacharya (celibacy) is the practice of religion. To meditate on the Immortal Self, in the chambers of the heart is to practise religion.

There is no religion without courage and truthfulness. There is no religion without love, compassion, purity of thought.

To refrain from killing, or taking life, is the highest religion. To serve humanity with Atma Bhav is the highest religion.

Religion is the highest of all blessings. It comprises devotion, meditation, service, non-injury, self-control and austerities. Even the gods bow down to him whose mind is ever centred in religion.

Wealth, comforts, company, etc, are not necessary for the practice of religion. Satsang or association with the wise, good elevating books, Sattvic food etc.,

Are necessary for the practice of religion.

Walk carefully so as not to hurt any living being. Speak reverently and without hurting any one's feelings. Take pure food. Speak the truth at any cost. Observe purity in thought, word and deed. These are the fundamental religious observances.

Religion does not consist in sitting cross-legged for some hours or in having shaven head or beard or matted locks, or in holding a staff or a Kamandalu, or in wearing rosaries or in having peculiar kinds of marks on the forehead or in besmearing the body with ashes or in the blowing of horns. Be pure. Be good and kind. Be gentle. Be sweet. Be patient. Be humble. Be truthful. You will find the way of religion. He who has a balanced mind and equal vision is really religious. He who is serene, dispassionate, self-controlled, forbearing, is religious. You will obtain the fruit of all religions if you are truthful, non-violent and pure.

To be just, to be friendly unto everyone, to be sincere and true, to meditate on the Immortal Soul within, to do good to all and make them happy, to comfort the sick and the afflicted, to serve the poor is your real religion.

Establish the religion of love which benefits all living beings in the entire world. Propagate the religion of heart which is the blessing to all creatures in the whole universe. It will bring supreme benefit to all living beings in the world.

May the All-World Religion's Federation establish the religion of love or the religion of heart or the religion of wisdom of oneness in the entire world. (Swami Sivananda)

42. RELIGION THE SOURCE FOR ALL GOOD

(A message from Sri Swami Sivanandaji for the Fifth Session of the All World Religions' Federation December, 1947)

Religion Produces a living influence on the heart and life of a person. It affords spiritual food for the mind. It transforms man into divinity. It is life divine. It melts, purifies and changes the heart.

The foundation of religion is faith. Its supersti ucture is Self-realization. Its walls are holiness, truthfulness, purity, non-injury, discrimination, dispassion, serenity, self-restraint, one-pointedness of mind, and aspirations are the bricks. Love is the cement.

Social customs and conventions have been given the status of religion by ignorant people. These social customs and conventions cannot, however be called religion. They are changing from time to time, according to the needs of the society or the exigencies of the occasion for the preservation of society and the spiritual well-being of the individuals.

You cannot call social customs and conventions as religion. Religion is eternal and unchanging. If you strictly follow it, it will lead you to eternal bliss and freedom from the trammels of birth and death.

Believe implicitly what the sacred scriptures tell you. Do what the holy scriptures bid you. You will soon attain the goal of religion.

All religions point out the path to God-realization or perfection or freedom. All religions are essentially the same. Real religion is one. It is the realization of oneness or Unity of the self. It is the religion of love or heart. All religions are the different versions of the one religion of Oneness and Love.

Man forgets all about his religion on account of ignorance or lust for power and greed. He has become irreligious. So he has come down to the level of a brute. He has lost all sense of morality. He does havoc. He creates mi chief. He stabs, loots and burns houses. The law of the jungle prevails. What a disgraceful, deplorable state!

If man always remembers the essential unity of all selves, if he is religious, if he has really understood that all beings are one, that all are children of one God, if he has knowledge of the law of Karma, the teachings of saints, prophets and seers, if he has understood the illusory nature of this world he will never think of doing any harm to others in thought, word or deed. He will never manufacture bombs. He will never think of selfaggrandisement. He will be ever leading the Life Divine and be happy for ever. He will be ever serving others. He will contribute all in his power towards the happiness of others.

Irreligious life is the cause of war and riots. Irre ligious life is the cause for restlessness, powerpolitics, party-politics, division, separation, murder, arson, and all sorts of disgraceful abominable, heavenclosing brutal acts.

A real religious man is a veritable God on this earth. He is a cementing synthetic force. He is all love. His heart is filled with mercy, kindness and affection. He is a blessed Peace-maker. He is a Superman.

Quoting scriptures will not make one religious. Taking one meal a day, the bending of knee, standing upon the head for three hours or on one leg till sunset, practising Vajroli or Nauli, doing Tratak on the sun, will not make one religious. Religious life is a life of rigorous discipline. It is the annihilation of the lower self and the development of a rich life of bliss and fullness in the Eternal.

Take away religion. Man then lives to no purpose, he strays far, far away from the purposes of his birth. Life becomes a dreary waste here. There is no living without religion. It is only religion that makes existence valuable and fills the mind with love, devotion, serenity, cheerfulness. True religion shows its influence on every part of your conduct and makes your life sublime and divine. Religion is the tie that links man with his Creator.

Religion is the foundation of society, the source of all goodness and happiness, the basis of virtua and prosperity of the individual and through the individuals of the nation. Civilization, law, order, morality, all that elevates man and gives peace to the nation are the fruits of the practice of religion.

Religion teaches men their close relationship with God and produces in them the spiritual awakening of divine-consciousness, it generates in them vigorous, sublime thoughts. Religion is mixed up with your very being and daily life. It gives you security, perennial joy, eternal life and everlasting bliss, and gives new hopes when all mundane hopes disappear.

Religious life is the greatest of all blessings. It lifts a man from the mire of worldliness, impurity, infidelity. Intellect is vain if it is not illuminated by religion. Religion does what philosophy can never do. If you live in accordance with the rules of religion, you will attain wisdom, immortality, everlasting peace and eternal bliss. You will become the wisest, the best, the happiest among men of this world.

Religion is the Supreme Home of Repose and Undying peace. It is the goal to which all things tend. It is the impregnable citadel of virtue, purity, and everlasting bliss. It is an imperishable fortress which cannot be destroyed by any number of atomic bombs.

Religion is not dogma. It is not merely a belief, or emotion. It is not merely a little prayer which one does when he suffers from severe intestinal colic or chronic dysentery. It is pre-eminently life in the Eternal or the everlasting Silence. It explains to ignorance the Nature of the Unseen or the Unknowable and shows the way to realize Him.

May you all lead a true religious life and thus attain the final beatitude or the Immortal Bliss!

43. RELIGION OF TRUTH

(A Message by Swami Sivananda for the 6th session of the All-World Religion's Federation held in March 1948)

You are all blessed beings, for you adhere to the religion of Truth. Truth is neither Hindu nor Mohammedan nor Buddhist nor Christian! Truth is One Homogeneous Eternal Substance. The follower of this religion walks on the path of Light, Peace, Wisdom, Power and Bliss. In fact, all religions are the countless roads that lead to the city of Perfection. Hence one religion should be sympathetic towards and respect other religions equally. If religions contradict one another, it is because some 'non-essential' principles among them have missed their true ideal and are lost in darkness.

The Hindu religion is synthetic but some of its formalist followers should divest theniselves of bigoted conventions. One should not consider that all other religions are infidel and heterodox. There are seeds of Reality in every religion. Only they must be allowed to send forth their offshoots. The Hindu religion has

a very wide heart and a fully illuminated foundation. The Vedas and the Upanishads emanate a religion that belongs to the whole universe. The Hindu believes in Eternity and Infinity, in Brahma which is Satyam, Jnanam, Anantam, Anandam, and he disbelieves the form of the world. What a glorious religion it is!

Taoism is a mystic religion. The Taoist does not think that social activity is the business of the man of wisdom. He believes in Spiritual integration. "One who knows speaks not, and one who speaks knows not," said Lao Tsze. Buddhism aims at the destruction of desires and attainment of Nirvana. The Peace that passeth all understanding is the goal of Christianity. The God of all religions has the common characteristics of freedom from limitations, boundless wisdom, perpetual existence and everlasting bliss. Even those who belong to sects which do not come under recognised religions, have got as their purpose behind them the acquirement of unlimited life, knowledge and joy. The whole world is thus a Spiritual Unity and all its inhabitants belong to the One Religion of the Realization of Truth.

O man ! Follow your own religion, but stick to its fundamental spiritual ideals. Draw up a programme for your life and that shall constitute the preparation for the journey towards Divine Life. You do not live on earth for the sake of talking about the why, what and how of God and Religion but to lead a virtuous spiritual life with a broad feeling, careful understanding, devotion to Truth and tolerance towards all beings. Every man has to drive into his head and heart that the only meaning of existence here is a refining of nature and widening of consciousness or expansion of the Self. O religionists! Why do you still speculate over the validity of religions? Your life is very short. What have you done in this life after living for so many years? You have spoken much about the greatness of and the necessity of religion; but what have you DONE actually? Religion is meant to steer the ship of evolution across the cycle of birth and death; it is not intended for the purpose of discussion, argumentation and logic. It is meant for being and doing.

The fundamental point in all religions is selflessness. This is the beginning of Divine illumination. An earnest attempt to sacrifice the interests of the self for a wider and noble purpose is what the men of the world are lacking in. The lower self must be offered to the more extensive Good. All intellectual calibre and cleverness of scholarship and ability to expound religion and philosophy are silenced before the man who has denied the personal self and dedicated himself to the higher purpose. Sacrifice for the good of others is the first step. Sacrifice for the sake of self-integration is the highest act. All men of all religions have to remember this truth. Only then all differences will vanish. Whether God is of this or that nature, the attainment of Him is the purpose of religion and it is through the negation of the interest of individual self. It is not a true religion which does not stress on and practise this 'alpha and omega" of religious experience. All Yogas concern this basic fact of Life Perfect.

The golden rule of every religion is "Do unto others as you wish to be done by". The world would have been a blissful heaven if religionists had practised this spiritual law which they themselves propound. The forms are clung to and the Spirit is neglected. The religious heads and the spiritual philosophers should try their best to infuse into all the correct knowledge of the spiritual Goal and the way of the religion leading to it and thus make the world a land of "Religion" and not "religions" for the realisation of the Self, God or Truth!

May the men, women and children of the earth know the meaning of real Religion! May all direct their minds to the glorious attainment of Liberation! May the Supreme Lord bless you all.

44. THE ALL-WORLD RELIGIONS' FEDERATION

(Inaugural Message by the Founder-President, Sri Swami Sivananda for the 9th session of the Federation held at Ananda Kutir, Rishikesh on 29th December 1949).

I

The Federation

The All World Religions' Federation

Does not need for its work

One parliament, one Government,

One religion, one language, one cap, one dress,

One kind of food, one way of saluting, one tumbler.

It is in need of one sincere, pure,

Determined, strong-willed, divine man

Of Tapas, realisation, fiery resolve and sustained zeal.

It does not want the help of Stalin and Truman,

This one man can unite all religious heads,

Bishops, Priests, Mahants and Mandaleshwars,

And establish an All-World Religions' Federation.

One Sankara established Adwaita philosophy.

One Gandhi established Swarajya or independence.

II

The Aim of the Federation

To establish one religion,

One Government, one language,

One system of purification,

One dress, one food,

One education, and one gait Is impossible.

Diversity is the order of creation;

Diversity gives beauty and charm.

All-World Religions' Federation

Points out unity in diversity.

Fasting leads to self-purification;

But a Mohammedan will fast in Ramzan,

A Hindu on Ekadasi; There is Bliss in God;

God is attained through prayer and meditation.

But each religionist has to pray in his own way.

All world religions' Federation

Sets forth the fundamentals

Truthfulness, love, purity.

Speak the truth; do not hurt others' feeling.

Follow the religion of the heart.

III

The Message for the Occasion

Salutations to the Lord, the One Supreme Truth, who is the substratum of all religions of the World ;

Events all over the world today are moving so fast that one who lags behind would lose the race. Closing up of the ranks among the followers of the various religions of the world, and among believers in God (Asthikas) of all nations and sects, can no more be delayed if we really and sincerely wish that religion should survive the onslaught of materialism. The unmistakable signs of Kali (the iron Age) are evident in what is happening today everywhere in the world. Progressive deterioration of Dharma, aided as it were by the very people whose primary duty it is to preserve Dharma, and a cowardly submission on the part of worldly heroes to the lure of material prosperity at the expense of the spirit; in short, the worship of Mammon to the complete exclusion of the Lord, these and their sister-evils that are rampant today all over the world should be checked in time if the invaluable treasure of ancient spiritual culture in every land is to be preserved for posterity.

Despite the seeming victory of untruth, the bold Upanishadic utterance 'Satyameva Jayate Na Anri tam' (Truth alone triumphs, not falsehood) cannot be falsified. The devotion in the heart of man to God, the aspiration, deep within man's being to know the God within him or the nature of his self, will remain for ever; till the Godhead is realised, this yearning and this aspiration will not cease. The purposeless and aimless ramblings in the woods of sense-pleasures will only leave man weary and worn out; when the time comes for him to take leave of the world, he will realise that he has wasted his life on earth. Only the Sage of self-realisation can escape this pitiable plight.

Death, disease, old age, misery and the innumerable inexplicable phenomena with which nature abounds will throw out a fresh challenge every moment; man cannot but take up this challenge and solve this riddle of life to his own satisfaction. There is only one solution to this riddle and that is God-realisation. Each religion shows a way to the realisation of God. As such religion is indispensable to Man. It is only the short-sightedness of certain people that prevents them from realising the glory of religion, and the indispensability of religion in man's life.

It is all the Lord's Lila, His play. Evil exists to glorify the Good. Irreligion exists to present to man's vision the ghastly consequences of the practice of wrong religion, and thus to re-kindle in man's heart a love for religion. Scepticism will soon vanish. Materialism will disappear from the face of the earth. People everywhere will once more realise that without religion they cannot live !

Is the duty of the leaders of the various religions of the world today to bring together the followers of those religions, and to work vigorously among them for the revival of the followers' faith in the Lord. Heads of religious sects should apply themselves vigorously to the 'purification' of their fold: for, only then will religion gain strength. A purified and revitalised religion will be strong enough to stand up against the heaviest odds and brave the most violent storm of antagonism, and survive unscathed.

That is the urgent duty of all the devotees of the Lord.

May the Almighty re-incarnate Himself in the heart of all devotees and believers all over the world and infuse into them the strength and courage to stick tenaciously to the tenets of their religion and to work for the triumph of the Divine over the un-divine force! May God bless all! May there be Peace, Plenty, and Prosperity all over the world! May He illumine the Buddhi of all men and women in the world!

45. COMMON MESSAGE OF ALL PROPHETS

(A message by Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj for the first anniversary of the World Parliament of Religions held for the first time at Sivanandanagar in April, 1953)

Hearken unto this message of Unity, Brotherhood and Love. Human birth is a gift bestowed upon you by God. It is verily a rare blessing. This gift of human birth is given to you for attaining Supreme Perfection and Bliss. It is an opportunity for striving and obtaining a sublime experience of an exalted spiritual Consciousness. It is to be utilized for this great purpose.

The various religions and faiths are so many methods evolved for fulfilling this great purpose of human life. Every religion and creed is indeed a pathway which leads to the consummation of this central purpose of life on earth. Each of the several Prophets and God-men expounded a way of life suitable to the needs and the temperaments of a particular age, clime and community in which he was born. But one and all of them sought but to present to man a path to the attainment of the eternal Ideal of Divine Realization and Spiritual Perfection. This is the one common basis of all religions. This is the fundamental, unifying factor underlying all faiths and creeds. They may apparently vary in their superficial details, but they are one fundamentally.

Their message is the message of Goodness and Godliness. Purify your nature by living a good life. Base yourself on virtue. Manifest truth, purity, love, selflessness and righteousness in your life and activity. Thus alone will you fulfil the true purpose of your life here. Give up all hatred. Eradicate egoism and anger. Eschew violence. Pledge yourself to love, serenity, humility, forgivenesss and non-violence. Abandon war. Abandon lust for power. Fill your heart with compassion, mercy and universal love.

O Leaders of all nations! Propagate the Idea's of Jesus Christ, Buddha, Mohammed. Zoroaster, Krishna, Confucius and Jaina Mahavira. Dissolve all differen. Ces. Stop manufacture of nuclear weapons. Let the law of Love prevail amongst nations and races. Let religion be the ruling factor of your lives. Let purity, peace and humility pervade your thoughts and ac ions. This is the essence of all religions of the world. This is the way to peace, prosperity and happiness of all.

Universal religion stands for selflessness, self-sacrifice, service, love and brotherhood. It seeks to propagate the religion of practical goodness. It stands for the Godliness on earth. It calls to dedicate yourselves to the life of truth, purity, service, devotion, meditation, and Self-realization here and now. Love all. Serve all. See the one God in all. Unify all Preach the gospel of oneness, spread the message of oneness. Live a life of oneness. Blessedness and Bliss will verily prevail upon earth. Embrace all mankind in the folds of the true religion of the heart. There will soon be peace and happiness in the world. Perfection unto all men.

46. A SYMPOSIUM ON RELIGION

The following are some excerpts from the speeches of the delegates to the twenty-first session of the AllWorld Religions' Federation which was held at Sivanandanagar on 5th January, 1956, under the presidentship of His Holiness Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj:

INWARD EXPERIENCE ESSENTIAL

(By Eric Pierschel, Germany)

Several names or expressions of God are only several facets of the great Absolute. Behind the expressions, we must have an experience of God in reality. We cannot believe in God before, unless we have experienced God. When anyone says that one believes in any religion or faith, and when one has not experienced God, one cannot say that one is speaking the truth. Therefore, we must experience inwardly what God is.

BASIS OF UNITY

(By Olgert Kaugerts, Australia)

Heterogeneity is the very nature of the world. Its constituents are the pairs of the opposites, and the world is perceived only on account of attraction and repulsion. The only entity wherein unity can be experienced is the Absolute or Brahman. Therefore, in order to prove this unity most effectively, we have to transcend this world of diversity, without being negligent to our respective duties, and unite ourselves with our true Being. Thus we can render the most valuable service not only to ourselves, but to the whole world at large.

ONE GOAL: DIVERSE PATHS

(By Vedanand Jha, B.A., Bihar)

We pray from within our hearts to some Divine power in our own languages, in our own ways. Our modes of prayer must differ, and so also places of worship, rituals, and so on since temperaments and cultural backgrounds vary from person to person, place to place. But the one common goal is God. The spirit of unity sets in when we learn to leave off the worldly field and go in for deeper inner researches. When we start the real practice of Religion, we come nearer the summit of the experience of the Spirit. For that the mind must be purified and poised and the struggle for attaining the goal has to be continuous until the objective is attained.

UNIVERSALITY IS EVIDENT

(By Guy Lafond, Canada)

As one does not question the universality of thought and speech, above the manifestation of diverse thought and speech systems, knowing full well that one pertains to the natural function in man, the other to its manifestation in particular circumstances, so also one should not doubt the universal religious character in man, based on an universal natural function, although he experiences the different means in which this quality is developed in him. Have we not based our life, Christians, or Hindus, on one principle, the basic link between universe, man and God, the last of which is the essence of all three, all three being but one and the same?

CENTRAL IDEAL OF THE ALL-WORLD RELIGIONS' FEDERATION

(By Swami Chidananda, Sivanandanagar)

What does the All-World Religions' Federation seek to do? It tries to approach man in his innermost essential aspect, not as the body or the human personality, but man as he is in truth; it takes into consideration the spiritual nature of man, and therefore it tries to bring about a unification through that part of man's life which has for its sole concern the assertion and the emphasizing of the spiritual nature of man which is common to all beings all over the universe, and it is that part of man's activity whose sole concern is the assertion and emphasizing of his spiritual aspect that is the religious Life of man. The sole task of religion, as also of the All-World Religions' Federation, is to call mankind to realize their super-mental, super-material, spiritual nature, and this is the medium of unification through which all defects and limitations in this world can be overcome.

THAT WHICH ONLY COUNTS

By Mrs. Sylvia Hellmann (Sivananda-Radha) Canada

The Federation helps people to realize the unity of existence. All of us pray only to one God, the same Reality, though in various ways, according to nationality, language, culture, individuality, and if each of us has his or her own language, what does it matter? The closeness we have to God is after all that which only counts. Let us find the One we have in common. "Serve, love, give, meditate, realize" is the teaching of my Master, Swami Sivananda, and these are the fundamental tenets in all religions. Let us practise these and realize that we are actually a big family, cantered in God. The realization of this oneness will bring peace to all humanity.

INNER REALIZATION THAT MATTERS

(By Prof. Shipra Banerji M. A., D. A. V. College, Dehra Dun).

I was born in a traditional Hindu family, but I had my education in a Catholic convent. At an age when the mind was most impressionable, I had a typical Hindu pagan training at home, side by side with Christian ideals that were instilled into me in school. Later, I had the good fortune to come in contact with a very religious Mohammedan, Ustad Allauddin Khan. I went and studied with him, and there I realized what underlying unity there was in all religions. I did not feel the rub of passing from one region into

another: when I went to a Catholic school, nor did I feel the bump when I got into a Muslim home. This made me feel that it is the inner realization that matters. The outward expressions hardly make any difference at all.

DIFFERENT WAYS TO GOD

By Hans Lajta, Austria.

There are different ways to God and the different religions are the ways. It is totally unimportant whether you call yourself a Hindu, or a Muslim, or a Buddhist. If you follow the path of the true tenets of your religion honestly, you will attain Selfrealization and when you have reached the ultimate goal, all, differences will vanish.

VOICE
OF
THE DEVOTEES

VOICE OF THE DEVOTEES

I am very grateful to you for the packet of your books, which contain valuable information and the wise counsels which offer for coursing one's life wholesomely and proving beneficial to those who have read these excellent publications. I personally highly appreciate your broad-mindedness and synthetic vision, which are the very things needed for the confused and chaotic world of to-day. The world has much to gain by emulating these virtues. The very thought of you inspires. May you continue doing the excellent work is my sincerest wish. India is in sore need of your synthetic ethics and spiritual teachings.

-Sri Dr. R. L. Soni, THE WORLD INSTITUTE OF BUDDHIST CULTURE.

The Soni Building, 'C' Road, Mandalay, Burma.

Through the kindness of a good friend, Donald Barfoot of Philadelphia, I have come to know of your great work in India. It is my earnest desire to establish an Ashram here in California, as this is the one state in America where a reasonably large number of people seem to be spiritually minded and inclined toward such endeavours. I humbly solicit your advice and blessings on this project

Sri H. Jay Dinshah, The American Vegan Society Malaga, New Jersey, U. S. 4.

Day after day I come to the conclusion that so much has to be learnt. I often wish for more leisure to enable me to concentrate more on the higher life, studies, etc. Dr. Werther gave me the wonderful news that again in 1962 another of your learned disciples will be visiting Western Australia. Needless to say, how much so many of us are looking forward to that personal contact with one who has spent many years at your feet. The visit should prove of tremendous value to all spiritually minded Australians. May 1962 bring you and yours at Rishikesh good health and success in the Lord's work, may it prove that such a few can do so much for the general good of mankind.

-Sri Frank C. Becker, Mandurah,(West Australia)

The Sage of Ananda Kutir, Sri Swami Sivananda, was born in South India. His inborn eagerness to serve humanity made him choose the medical profession. He had the divine healing hand. The deeper problems of life and the quest of Truth compelled him to renounce the world and embrace the Holy Order of Sannyas in 1924. After a period of intense austerities, he founded the Divine Life Society, the Yoga-Vedanta-Forest-Academy. The Ashram is rightly named ANANDA KUTIR, "The Abode of Bliss" and is visited by aspirants from all over the world. The Swami is the author of over 200 books and has disciples all over the world. The Society has Branches in all countries. To read his illuminating works is to drink the ancient nectar in new, modern dazzling cup.

-Editor, "YOGA",Italian Section of the Yoga-Vedanta Academy, Rome. (Italy) AUGUST, 1961.

After a long time of darkness in my soul, I had a real joy with your nice letter. It was difficult for me to believe that the Lord could bless me with such Divine Grace. I express you my gratitude for all and especially for your generous offer to help me in my spiritual path. I suffered deeply-I began to study your books: Science of Pranayama, Hatha Yogathey helped me very much and therefore I began to know and

love you. You are in my heart. I met you through books and please take my heart for ever. I will follow your instructions. I am reading the Essence of Principal Upanishads, and it is the book that gave me a real divine help. When I study the book, it seems to me that I am out of this world, identifying myself with something that I can't explain. I wish to thank you again for all your great kindness towards me. Please receive the best of myself.

-Sri Olga de Monasterics, Guatemala City. (S. America).

I have your photograph beside me always as a remembrance of your Healing and Inspiration. My health improves with each day. I read the Twelve Blessings daily and am gathering together people of like spiritual inclination. I look forward to every day and every experience with a new inner growing and understanding.

-Sri Elise E. Chalmere, Queensland. (Australia),

May I first thank our Father at Heaven who showed me a way to correspond with you. I feel to join you in spirit to obtain from you some of your spiritual books to feed my soul. In other words I wish you to lead me to everlasting life in the name of our Lord.

-Sri K. N. Quartey, Accra. (Ghana)

My attention has been called to your comprehensive system of Yoga. I intend to concentrate my further studies upon the Indian Philosophy in order to surmount the restlessness and dis-co-ordination of my different tendencies and endeavours. I would be thankful if you will inform me how I could become your disciple. I have studied and practised Yoga, but I need a Guru at this stage.

-Sri Dieter Hansbeck. Hamburg. (Germany)

It was a real joy to receive your letter, I feel that I have been led to you. Be my Guru, I will try to be a real disciple. Though the distance between us is great, perhaps a real connection can be established. I read your book: Concentration and Meditation along with Naked They Pray by P. Gervis, in which he wrote about you. Then I bought Complete Illustrated Book of Yoga by Swami Vishnudevananda. I discovered that you were his Guru. I feel this points me to you. You can help me. Some people seem to find their own way, but I think I must learn from one who knows the Truth.

-Sri John McDonnell, Hammond. (Indiana). U.S.A.

Inaugurated by Sri Swami Sivanandaji, the Divine Life Mission has completed a quarter of a century in edifying service to India in particular and to the whole world in general. The Divine Life Society has developed into a global organization through the founder's zeal and enthusiasm. The reason for this splendid achievement seems to lay in its aims-particularly in dissemination of spiritual knowledge. Its activities are reciprocating the predominant desire of everybody-longing for happiness. Numerous members of present day humanity have fully appreciated the society's merit in their spiritual evolution

and therefore extended their support to its aims. The continuous growth and expansion of its activities during the past 25 years clearly manifest the need and importance of its existence. Therefore, it can look with unshakable confidence towards a more magnificent progress in future.

-Sri O. Kaugerts, Divine Life Society, Melbourne. (Australia).

I am interested to receive your publication concerning your scientific researches about the physical exercises of Yoga under your direction. My teacher of Yoga, Selvarajan Yesudian in Zurich, gave me your address and told me, that you would be able to furnish, these amazing results confirmed by medical observations. More and more the medical men are interested in the scientific research of Yogic exercises and there are some in my school also. I wish to have documents of your researches. I have your German publications Concentration and Meditation, Hatha Yoga, Kundalini Yoga. Very often I read them and they gave me great wisdom and guidance everytime. But I would appreciate to have more details. I have the publications of synthese Universelle of Trogen also.

-Sri Medaleine Schneider-Jacot, Switzerland. (BASLE)

I have been greatly encouraged by Sri Swamiji's letter. I am grateful for the interest you are taking in my spiritual practices. I still remember the 13th November last 11 a.m. when I had your Darshan at your Ashram, in the presence of so many devotees, I have the vision always before me. I hear the prayers, see Swamiji giving instructions to aspirants and your disciples distributing coffee, milk, fruits and sweets to the visitors. When I did Pranams to Swamiji's feet, you gave me so many valuable books, but I only begged you for your Blessings. At once Swamiji uttered some Mantras and that gave me great joy. May the Lord keep me always as your servant.

Sri Gordhandas Haridas, Beira, (P.E. A) (East Africa)

You make me happy more and more with so many gifts of love like a precious letter dated 28. 6. 61., a valuable book "Sivananda the Messenger of Peace" and a fine photo of Gurudev himself with helping Mantras and blessings. Every breath of mine may be offered to beloved Gurudev as a small thanks-giving.

I humbly ask you to fix an auspicious day for the commencement of my journey to Sivanandanagar in 13 till 20th November or in December 61.

You are all in all. Your force will make all things possible for me. I adore you and bow down to you.

Sivananda Barbara,Germany.

Your kind letter with your picture. I thank you so much it is so good-you look kind. I like you very much. I put it in my bill-fold, and went to the Theosophical Society to a lecture. I met a woman there. I was showing her your picture. She knew you and called you by name and I was amazed. She wanted me to go to the East-West Cultural Centre on the following Thursday. I went and was more amazed to find that the girl Beatrice who resides at Ashram is the girl who once lived at the EastWest Centre. Lucille is soon going to India. I think she is coming on to see you. Everything seems to be fitting together like pieces in a jig-saw puzzle.

I got your books last week...I was so excited as a child, they smelt so wonderful of incense. Oh, how-1 do thank you. What a marvellous person you are with your feet on the ground and your head in the Heavens. I am going to hold classes as you said and start with Gayatri. Hope to have the first meeting on the 27th July, the day of the Holy Ashadha festival in India, a good day to start. Will you please be with us in Spirit? I know, I will be guided. I am leaning on you for instructions. I feel that I should come to India first and then return here prepared to fill the world with Peace and Power.

-Sri Billie Cordes, Woodland Hillls, California. U.S.A.

I am grateful for your kind letter. Your guidance, grace and Gita's teachings hand in hand have made me realise: 'who am I?' Yoga Asanas for two years have also changed me and inspired me. Since then I feel that I am treading the spiritual, divine path successfully.

-Sri B. B Hari, Sava (Fiji Islands)

Dear Swamiji, I thank you for your last letter. I read it every day, for I needed the assurance that you are always with me. I have gone through a terrible psychic experience which lasted about five weeks. Every day and night a new policyteachings sounded right into me. I felt that I am being observed by everyone in the Ashram. Today I am free. I looked at your picture Guruji and thought of the divine qualities you have in your nature. This little picture is always on my forehead. I felt that someone was talking to me and consoling me. Now I feel to ask you to pray for me.

-Sri Gertrude Weinmann, San Francisco. (USA)

Swamiji, I want to give myself unconditional for, there is nothing except this what I want to do. O how can I convince you of my earnestness and love for Him, who is the soul of all Beings. Somewhere is the Guru, who will help and guide me. Is it possible to be admitted into Your Ashram where I could get spiritual instructions. The Eternal Beloved led me to you. If you like, Swamiji, speak to me. You know more about me than I know about myself,

-Sri Y. G. Wessendorp, Sassenheim (Holland).

I thank you for your kind letter and also for the parcels of books. It is always a pleasure to receive your books which are full of devotion. Sri Anand is a real Yogi. All the knowledge he got during his stay with you, he applies nicely in his daily life. He also guides me nicely and not a day passes unless he teaches me something useful. We daily read Brahma Sutras.

-Sri Rhodd Yogi Anand, Trinidad. (BWI)

I always experience the Lord's manifestations through Sri Swami Sivanandaji. My experiences with Swamiji are unique and wonderful. He saved me in the hours of danger to my life, in the days of grave misfortune and trial. Perpetual thanks I owe to the master. His profound and wise cautions always reached me just before the occurence of any grave event, warning me in time. In the hours of depression, the Voice of my Beloved Master resounds within myself, guiding and showing me the way. Hopeless disorders in the material life solve by themselves.

Miss Sri N. Ponnampalam, Valvettiturai (Ceylon)

Although born in India, Swami Sivananda is wellknown to us in Europe, just as well as in America, Australia, New Zealand or Africa. How is it possible that the name SWAMI SIVANANDA found its way to people living in remote countries? What is the secret of His fame? He gives us the answer: "Whenever there is decline of virtue and predominance of vice, then I embody myself". Seventy-six years ago the DIVINE LOVE incarnated itself in human shape and became known to the world as Preceptor of DIVINE LOVE; attainable by Life DIVINE.

-Sri George Folprecht, Praha (Czechoslovakia).

My sincere thanks to you for having me at the Ashram and my experiences there are something that I shall carry with me for the rest of my life. I shall try my utmost to carry out your teachings and help to spread what I have leant to all I meet.

-Sri P.M. Gavernder, Durban. (S.Arfica)

Satsang is held every evening at Burnaby Ashram. At a special Satsang on November fourth, the Birthday Prasad of our Holy Master from the Ashram was distributed to the devotees. Many friends spent a joyful day from eleven A.M. to late in the evening. Kirtans, prayers and a spiritual message from Swamiji were the important items of the programme. We prostrate in humbleness at your Feet for awakening us to our divine purpose in life. We walk in the light. We are divinely blessed and we cannot adequately express in words. We prostrate at our Guru's Holy Feet for sending us the greatest gift that could be bestowed on us- A light upon our path to guide us to the goal. How better can we express our gratitude than by nourishing this flame that has been kindled in our hearts.

-Sri Judy and Welton Paiger, N. Vanconver. (B.C.)

I started reading books on comparative religion and prefer the Vedantic aspect of Hinduism. I have read your book on Yoga Asanas and am practising Asanas and Pranayamas daily. Presently I am reading your book on Tantra, Nada and Kriya Yoga, and came across an account of the wonderful work you are doing, and the Divine Life Society. Some time ago my son came across some leaftets on Bhagavat Gita and wanted me to get some more of it. I find the stamp: "Divine Life Society" on it. You can imagine my relief and joy when I read about the colony of Yogis at Rishikesh and the work going on there. I need your help. I have so much to learn. Please instruct me as to the correct path.

-Sri M.R. Hubert Colombo. (Ceylon).

RELIGION IS ONE

Children of Immortal Being!

Peace be unto you all! There is no

All religions have come from one source. Religion for God; but He has given us different paths to suit different types of people who are in different grades of intellectual, emotional and spiritual evolution. All religions point to the same objective; all religions place before us the same ideal; to control our mind, restrain our senses to find out the one common Consciousness that is hidden in all these names and forms.

Religion is not a dogma or a comfortable fancy or a hobby of a certain group of people. Religion is the expression of the universal impulse which none can resist. Every person thinks differently, and yet, thinks towards the One Supreme Being. Differences are in the roads and the ladders, not in the city reached or the roof climbed over. The lower distinctions can be brought, together and reconciled only in the light of the higher unity of the Truth. Man is a combination of the animal and the Divine-God and brute, crossed at a point. Every individual has both these characteristics in him. The brutal propensity hurls him down to difference, misery, battle, blood-shed and death and the Divine reality lifts him up to the rich and splendid realm of glorified and purified plenitude of the immortal Essence. Religion is the answer to the call of this higher impetus from the One Real God who is seated in the heart of the universe as its very life itself.

Beloved friends! Behold the unity or oneness of all religions. He who knows the real Tattwa, who has grasped the essence of all religions will never enter into discussions or heated debates. May you all live happily with one heart!

May you all understand the essential unity of all religions! May the blessings of the Founder of all religions be upon you all!

-Swami Sivananda